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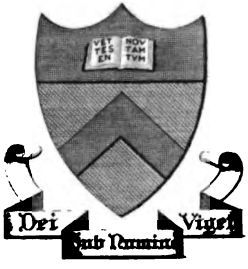

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October 1908

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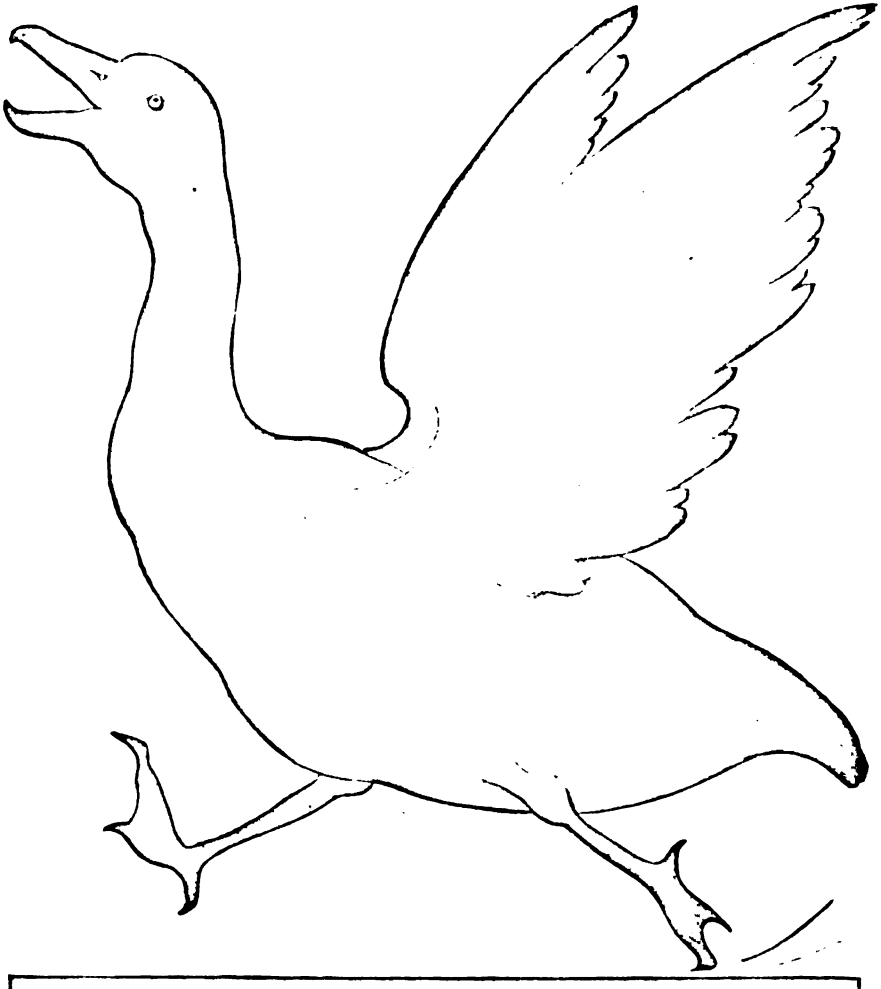

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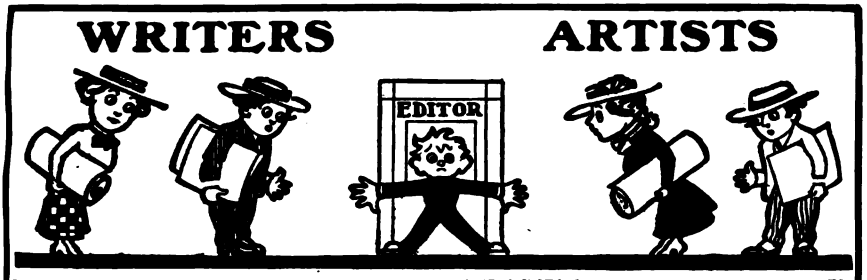

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The Door of Death.*

BY GEORGE SEIBEL.

HE first hint of the fearful truth came to me a week ago, on the morning after I arrived at this hotel. I turned out of bed and groped toward the window, to open the blinds and let the gold of the morning pour in, when I stumbled against a cuspidor. And my foot, striking the porcelain, gave forth a metallic ring.

It startled me, but I thought no more of it just then. There was a dull pain in my head, and I raised the window, thinking the morning breeze might drive it away. They had told me that the fresh mountain air and the waters of the iron spring would make a new man of me. Ah, they had little thought, doctor and friends, what it would make of me!

I returned to my bedside, and knelt down to reach under it for my shoes. I always put my shoes under the bed, my watch in one shoe and my pocketbook in the other. No burglar would ever think of looking into a pair of shoes for valuables. As I stooped to reach under the bed, my eyes fell upon the place where I had lain. There was the depression made by my body, but it bore no manner of resemblance to the contour of a human body—

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(RECAP)

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in fact, it looked very much more like the outline of a huge door-key.

I laughed, and said to myself that it was a play of shadows, an optical illusion caused by the beams of the morning sun slanting against the post of my bed. A crazy idea! Whoever heard of a bed-post casting a shadow like a door-key? If the water at the springs the other day had held in solution anything stronger than iron, I should have blamed it on the four glasses I had drunk. However, I determined to dismiss the matter from my mind — my head was drowsily aching without this new worry — so I brushed my hands over the sheets to smooth them out. It would create gossip if the chambermaid saw that the impression left by my body in the bed was not that of a human body at all, but rather resembled the outlines of a huge door-key.

Since then the fearful truth has slowly forced itself upon me, and, O God! I have been driven to every shift and expedient to keep the secret from becoming known. I have walked slowly and tiptoed in the corridors, lest the metallic impact of my feet upon the tiles should arouse suspicion. On the warmest days I have muffled myself in my greatcoat, to prevent spying eyes from wondering about the shape of my body. Despite these precautions the clerk and the porters look after me as I pass, and I am sure they suspect something. I dare not stop to talk to any of the other guests, not even to *her*, for fear my awful secret will become known.

Ah, if they knew — if *she* knew! The thought appals me; I feel the perspiration break out upon my brow; and, as I lift my hand to wipe it away, I feel that my brow is icy as iron.

It is the fault of the mineral spring water — of that I feel certain. The four glasses I drank soon after my arrival must have caused all this trouble. Though I know nothing of medicine, nor of the mysterious inter-actions of matter and mind and chemical reagents, I feel dimly certain that the particles of iron, entering my blood, have worked this transformation. The thought makes me faint — I stagger — I clutch the newel-post, for I must not fall. Meseems that, as I clatter down in the corridor, one of the bell-boys will pick me up and tell the clerk, "Some guest has dropped this." And then the secret would be out.

I can understand the transmutation of my bodily tissue into

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metallic molecules. It is similar to the process of ossification by which a well-known museum freak was produced, analogous to the process of petrifaction by which whole forests have been turned into stone. But why this strange shape? Why not retain my human semblance? What mad prank have the mysterious powers of the mind played with my body? I remember, before lying down on the bed that night, the door-key was the last tangible object of my thoughts. I rose to see whether I had locked the door. Then, as I lay down again, the key, huge and luminous, seemed to hang over my bed. As I fell asleep, its bow seemed to press coldly upon my forehead.

I dread discovery. What will become of me? Perhaps, like the Ossified Man, I shall become the prey of some dime museum manager. I can see the flaring canvas painted with the accursèd shape; I can hear the lecturer invite the gaping crowd to "Come in and see the Human Door-key! Only a dime!"

It is in vain to think jestingly of the matter in this strain, as I have tried to do. I have said to myself, "Be grateful you are not turned into an umbrella, for then you would tremble continually in dread of being stolen. Be grateful you are not turned into a Venetian glass vase, for then you would shiver in perpetual apprehension of being broken. Be grateful you are not turned into a pump, for if you met a friend, and he shook your hand vigorously, a stream of clear cold water gushing from your mouth would betray your secret at once."

Indeed, I am sincerely grateful that it is no worse. And grateful, too, that *she* does not suspect. If she knew, she would no longer smile at me, even her mournful smile. What would she say?

And what would the hotel manager say if he knew — especially if he knew the full import of this mysterious transformation? Only yesterday this import dawned fully upon me. It is weird — it is positively uncanny. There is a kind of escritoire in my room, and it is locked. I had decided to write the doctor about my queer sensations, especially about the flattened feeling in my head, and I stood before the escritoire wondering how I should open it. By some subtle suggestion, coming I know not whence, I was moved to bend my aching head forward and lean it against

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the door of the desk. As I did so, my head instantaneously passed into the keyhole, I wrenched about in quick alarm, and the door sprang open.

It seems that the metallic molecules of my strangely shapen body are still in a state of fluxion, and conform at once to the bolts and tumblers of any lock. It is a gruesome thought — *I am a key that opens any door!*

If the police should learn of it! They would apprehend me at once. It would be thought dangerous to leave me at large, for suppose I should avail myself of my weird power and become a burglar! Ho, ye money-bags, what would your double doors and triple locks avail you? Your strong-boxes would open at a twist of my head. I could walk into jewelry stores at night, and help myself to trays of rings and watches. When people would leave on their summer vacations, I could enter their houses and ransack the drawers of desks and bureaus. I could penetrate with ease to the treasure chambers of gold-hoarding kings, or to the harems of uxorious sultans. I certainly could not blame the police for placing me under arrest if they discovered this strange power to be mine. But I do not fear them —prison doors would open to let me out as easily as any door in this hotel would open to let me in.

It seems that the same state of fluxion which prevents the metallic molecules of my body from solidifying in the form of the key, still keeps the people I meet from guessing my dread secret. I am hovering, as it were, between the two shapes — like a disembodied spirit uncertain which form to assume. O God, 'tis well that no one knows! What would *she* say if she came up to look into my eyes, and looked instead through the bow of a key into space?

Can she suspect anything? Is she here by some collusion with the doctor who recommended me to come hither? Sometimes I think so —for she acts strangely. We were affianced, yet she barely notices my presence, nods to me distantly, though pleasantly, seems to avoid me as I avoid her. Last evening, when I followed her up the hotel stairs, my feet clicking clearly upon the tiles, she walked faster until she fairly flew across the upper corridor; then I heard her turn the key in the door of her room. Ah,

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if she knew how little avails the locking of doors against me! I need only press my head into the keyhole and give one wrench; the most complicated lock would fly open instantly. What would the Prisoner of Chillon not have given to possess this power? Or Ugolino in the Tower of Famine? Or M. de Beaufort in Mazarin's prison? Or Galileo in the carcer of the Inquisition? Or the thousands that have been cast helpless into the Bastilles and Chateaux d'If of the world? By them this inexplicable transformation, this perplexing gift, would have been welcomed as a blessing, as a divine interposition like in the case of Paul and Silas in the dungeon at Philippi. To me it comes as a cruel curse, an affliction little short of death.

It were easier to bear if I could make the remotest use of it. But what use could I make of it? I am qualified only to become a traveling locksmith or a burglar's first assistant. I should prove a valuable helper to some midnight marauder, for I could tell him that hotel guests occasionally put their valuables into their shoes, which they stand just under the bed, at the foot.

Perhaps I might turn my gift to use in a small way even here. And by doing so I might discover whether the people of the hotel suspect anything. I have seen them look curiously at my shadow as I crossed the lawn. I must keep out of the sunlight.

Approaching the clerk, I said hurriedly, in a casual manner:

"If — I suppose you sometimes do — if you should have occasion to break open any door or to force the lock of a trunk — "

"Sir," said he, and looked at me in a way that told me he divined what I meant to say.

"If you should," I continued, trying to feign a careless smile, "don't burst them open until you've called me." Then I leaned over and whispered into his ear, "I'll open them for you."

He looked after me in a way that left little doubt in my mind. He more than suspects my secret. It will require all my cunning to keep it from him. If it were not for my shadow!

Going up into my room I thought over this, though my head ached and throbbed. Throwing open the curtains, I looked at my shadow upon the wall. If any lingering doubt had remained in my mind as to the horrible truth, one glance now dispelled it. The shadow of my body was truly the shadow of a gigantic key. I

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cannot go out any more unless I am muffled up past recognition — at any rate not in the daytime, nor in an unequally lighted room. I remember the story of a certain Peter Schlemihl, who sold his shadow and then wandered over the wide world in despair over his loss — how glad I should be to give my shadow away before it gives me away!

As I watched it upon the wall, flickering and fading with the motion of the wind-stirred curtain, another strange phenomenon arrested my attention. The bow of the key was where my head should have been; the stem of it formed my body; the bridge represented my feet. Now and again a sort of undulation or tremor shook the shadow, and I noted that the bow and the bridge had changed places. It is evidently another result of the state of fluxion in which I realize all the molecules of my body to be, and I suppose it will continue until the process of ferrification is completed. If I had drunk more of the iron water, doubtless by now I should be jingling on somebody's key-ring. I am like the paramecium, that elastic animalcule which projects limbs from its body whenever and wherever it requires them — hands to seize food or feet to kick foes. I am in a state of fluxion, unstable and undulating; I feel all through me the endosmosis and exosmosis of my dual elements — flesh and iron; this flexible, that rigid; the one human-like, the other key-shaped.

The thought is maddening. I would blow out my brains, but for two considerations. One is that a bullet fired at my head would pass harmlessly through the bow of the key, if the bow happened to be head at the time; if the bridge end chanced to be head, the bullet would fall flattened to the floor. The shot would attract attention, arouse suspicion, and suspicion is already rife. Of course, I might go and leap into the lake, being sure of sinking to the bottom, and no one would ever know what had become of me. But there I should lie under water, and rust, rust, rust. The idea is unbearable, for if I cannot help being a door-key, I at least do not wish to be a rusty one.

Besides, if I made an end of myself, what would *she* say? She loved me once — I believe she still loves me — we were affianced. Sometimes I think the doctor has sent her here to watch over me, and that she knows, for I have caught her eyes red as if with weep-

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ing. Does she know? I must sound her — yet I must be careful lest she sound me, and discover that I sound like iron.

It must be done with tact. I hear her coming up the stairs now. I will easily cast her off the scent.

"Ah, Eleanor, you may have noticed that — that as I walk along this corridor my footfall clicks like — like metal."

"Well," she asked, and looked at me in a startled way.

"It's just because I have had my shoes soled and heeled with iron. I was afraid the dampness of the ground here, soaking through leather soles, might bring on rheumatism. It's very damp here — that is also the reason you see me always muffled up in my overcoat."

"Oh," she said, and began to edge away toward her door.

"Don't be afraid of me — stay — I wouldn't harm you if I could. Of course, the past is past — you believed the slanders of those who would make out that I wasn't quite right in my head — you believed them, and it's all over between us. But I love you still."

"Do not remind me of it," she said, shading her eyes with her hands, and retreating more rapidly toward her room.

"It is true — I love you still, love you madly. If there is anything I can do to show my love, call upon me to do it. Alas, it is little that lies in my power, but if — if, for instance, you should lose the key of your jewel casket, bring the casket to me. I'll open it for you — you understand?"

By this time she had reached the door of her room, and stood upon the threshold.

"Good-night!" she said, in a tone almost tearful, and shut the door in my face. I stood in consternation for a moment; I had not dreamed of such an affront, after I had been at great pains to express my devotion. I rapped upon the door and cried:

"Open and hear what I have to say. There was a time when you listened gladly to what I said. Open!"

"Go away," she cried, "Go to your room — sleep — compose yourself — that will be best for you."

"You must listen to me, you *must* open the door, or *I will.*" I said this with terrible emphasis, so that she could not help but understand my meaning.

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"If, as you say, you love me still, go to your room," she said.

"I love you still," I repeated vehemently, "and *love laughs at locksmiths!* Open the door, or I will. I have a power to open doors more potent than the shoulder of Porthos."

"Go away — go to your room," she almost screamed.

"You suspect, but you do not know the extent of this power," I answered. "If I were Harpagon, no treasure would be secure from me. If I were Paul Pry, no secret could be locked up too tightly. If I were Don Juan, no haughty beauty's chamber door would bar my passion out."

"Go away," she shrieked. "I have rung for the porter. Go away!"

"You shall hear all I have to say," I cried in rage. "Before he comes I'll be at your side, and you must send him off again."

I stooped forward and pressed my head against the keyhole. It passed into the lock instantaneously, and I knew that I need but give one twist for the door to fly open. At that instant the porter came rushing up, in response to her ringing and her frantic cries, and seized me from behind. As I twisted my head in the lock he tugged — tugged like a demon. I felt my senses leaving me — strangulation, darkness, horror succeeded. He tugged and wrenched — I twisted and gasped. It is over — for suddenly I felt all human senses quitting my body, and I fell to the floor with a clang, just a common iron door-key.

I am dead. I, Martin Farringdon, am dead — I died at her door. The body that was mine is iron and shapen like a door-key. They have carried it into the room where I was, and laid it upon the bed. When day comes they will see that I am dead. And what is left of me will perhaps be hung upon a nail above the chimney-piece.

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The Clue.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

IT was midnight. In Fifth Avenue there were few pedestrians, and so a fat man in evening dress, hurrying northward, attracted attention. Six night birds, who thought his actions mysterious, followed a few paces in the rear. Occasionally they questioned each other as they trotted briskly along, but the questions were put in the hopeless tone that the questioner uses when he knows the person questioned cannot supply the information he requires.

The fat man didn't speak. He moved at a smart jog trot, looking straight to the front and seemingly unaware of the fact that he was the cause of much conjecture. The mystery scented by the others was caused by the peculiar movements of his hands. His arms were outstretched, and his two hands revolved round each other like the hands of a fisherman hauling in a line. And the inquisitive ones in the rear were unable to explain this movement. It was not a dignified exercise for a fat man in evening dress, and their curiosity was justified.

At Thirty-second Street a policeman, dozing on the opposite side of the road, straightened himself as he saw the hurrying group coming towards him. Swinging his night stick he crossed over and waited the approach of the little procession. He was in charge of that neighborhood, and there should be an explanation.

The fat man passed the officer at a gallop. His hands were moving faster and faster, and the tails of his coat were sticking out like little black wings in his rear. The Law was a trifle astonished. As he stood looking after the leader of the hurrying squad, he was jostled by the inquisitive ones following, and he became annoyed. He grabbed a straw-hatted youth by the shoulder and questioned him.

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"What's the matter?" he cried.

"Search me," answered the questioned one. "Le'me go; I want to see what the ole guy is up to."

The policeman lost his temper. He was being treated with disrespect. A festive citizen was running a fool procession over his beat without giving him the least explanation! So he let go of the youth's shoulder and dashed madly after the man in evening dress.

"Here, what's the game?" he panted. "What sort of a stunt are you up to, anyhow?"

The fat man shook off the grip of the Law and ran faster than ever, his outstretched hands circling round each other like the arms of a windmill in a gale.

"Stoop down and I'll tell you," he gasped, as the officer made another effort to restrain him.

The evident respectability of the fat man made the policeman comply with the request, and bending his six-foot frame he ran alongside the other as he listened. The inquisitive mob, now numbering a score, gathered in close, but the nightstick described a circle and they backed into safety.

For nearly twenty yards the policeman ran with bent back. Then he straightened himself up and laughed loudly. "Good for you," he cried. "Sprint a little, or we may be too late." Then he started to run madly alongside the man with the windmill arms.

The curious ones were annoyed. They were taxpayers, and they did not think it right that the officer, who was their servant, should keep the solution of the mystery a secret. They growled angrily whenever the Law chuckled over the story that the fat man had whispered, but they followed at full speed. Late revellers joined the group, but when they asked the reason of the chase they were told to watch the movements of the leader's hands.

"Been doin' that all the way from Twenty-eighth street," gasped the early followers, proud in the possession of that much information. "He's told the cop a joke, an' now the hickory wielder is hittin' the trail with him."

At Forty-eighth street the policeman met the officer on the adjoining beat, and hooking him by the arm he whispered into his ear as he kept pace with the fat man. The new policeman guf-

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fawed loudly, and again the angry crowd looked vainly for the humor that seemed apparent to the two guardians of the peace. The first policeman slackened speed, called out a friendly "Good luck" to the fat man, and then returned to his own beat, while his comrade trotted swiftly in his place.

The fat man swung east, down Fifty-third street, and new recruits joined the procession at every yard. But all thirsted vainly for information. Questions put by the newcomers were met with the one answer: "Don't know; look at his hands. Been twisting them round and round all the way from Twenty-eighth Street."

Crossing Third Avenue the fat man halted suddenly. He knelt down upon the car tracks, and the officer stooped beside him. The crowd pressed round till the swiftly swung nightstick swept them back. The man in evening dress crawled across the tracks and raked the ground with his fingers.

Presently he leapt to his feet and yelled out excitedly. "It's all right, officer," he cried, and once again his hands started to revolve round each other as he dashed towards the water.

Just here a third policeman was initiated into the mystery that was troubling the crowd, and with a merry laugh he took up a position by the side of the fat man. The crowd cursed collectively. Here was a mystery that had been explained three times to bulky policemen, yet they were kept in ignorance. It wasn't fair. They had a right to know why the man in evening dress was doing the windmill performance with his hands, and why that stunt amused the policeman. Much of their breath was exhausted in strange phrases denouncing the secrecy of the police, but they were determined to see the end.

Near Second Avenue a man standing on the sidewalk turned when he heard the noise of the charging squad and contemplated the runners. Then he stepped into the street and crossed over. The fat man chuckled. He whispered to the policeman at his right hand, and the officer dashed ahead. The man in front started to run, but his pursuer overhauled him in a dozen strides, and they rolled on the pavement.

"Wot's the matter?" gasped the captured one. "Wot are yer scruffin' me for?"

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"This gentleman wants his rubber door-mat," murmured the policeman, relieving his captive of the parcel he carried beneath his arm.

"Hully Gee!" exclaimed the prisoner, rubbing his eyes and staring round him at the crowd. "Where did yer get the mob, an' how did yer know I had it, anyhow?"

"I had you on a string," explained the fat man, holding up a black thread in the light of the street lamp. "I've caught five men who have tried to steal that mat. It's attached to a thousand yards of strong thread, and as they generally grab it when the streets are quiet, the trail is always clear."

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Told by the Sheriff.*

BY W. T. FERNANDEZ.

HAT is it this time — rustlers?" asked the Doctor, as Sheriff Bill Jeffords, sun-browned, booted and spurred, a murderous .44 slung on each hip, flipped his sombrero on one chair and deposited himself in another.

"No — hold-up," answered Bill, stuffing a short pipe with cut plug. "That gang what held up the 'Overland' a few days ago. Had to chase 'em thirty miles into the hills before we could convince 'em they were our game, an' then had to plant three of 'em out there. The boys are fetchin' the other two, a little the worse for wear, down to the calaboose. Curious how things keep a comin' up after a fellow's almost forgotten 'em. A story'll begin in Texas an' wind up in Alaska, an' its mighty disturbin' to meet the son in Arizona of the fellow you had to hang in Montana, but it's a cussed small world an' I found it out again today for about the four hundred and fifty-fourth time, by comin' across a woman's picture on one of those gents we collared."

The Doctor pricked up his ears. The Sheriff's yarns were drawn from a varied experience as scout, cowboy and Indian fighter, and always showed, like a flash of summer lightning, a thread or two of the fibre that went to make up the men of the frontier. A terror to evil doers was Sheriff Bill, but he had never harmed a fallen man and never feared a strong one. Hurrying the completion of the prescription he was mixing, the physician sent his boy off to the patient's house with it, and suggested that the Sheriff fire away with his yarn.

"Well, Doc, as I said, when we searched the two gents, I come across a picture on one of 'em that took me back fifteen years, when I was a Captain of Rangers down in the Lone Star coun-

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try. Those were lively times, Doc, what with Injuns, rustlers an' Greasers, not to mention gangs of boozy cow punchers what'd tear into a town an' paw it up to see what made it grow an' shoot out all the mirrors in the swell gin emporium of the said town, it was lively, you bet. We were up against it good and plenty, an' the stunt of goin' into a cage of wild tigers would be easy compared to keepin' law an' order along the Rio Grande in the good old days.

"We'd just rounded up 'Red' Kelly an' his select bunch of horse lifters — by gettin' to the river a little sooner than they did — an' had turned back with the intention of takin' 'em into El Paso for trial before old man Hornby. He was a good hangin' judge, was Hornby, an' it made things look more regular, 'cause if you should happen to hang the wrong man, as sometimes happens in those horse cases, there'd be a howl; but if the honorable court hung the wrong man, it was into the calaboose for any one that put up a squeal, with Old Hornby on the bench, you could bet on that.

"We were hittin' the back trail at a lively clip when one of 'B's' Corporals held us up with word from the Major to swing up the river about ten miles an' help out a half-baked town located thereabouts. Smallpox an' the whole durned population down with it. 'Quarantine 'em and help 'em all you can,' was the Major's message.

"The first thing we raised on gettin' up to the town was a priest standin' on the steps of a little old-fashioned church. He was a tall, thin man, very weak lookin' an' although he couldn't have been over forty, his hair was as white as the snow caps on those hills over there. Holdin' up his hand for us to halt, he came toward us an' hailed me. 'How many men have you got what's had smallpox?'

"I put it up to the tribe, an' about five held up their hands. 'Let 'em come forward,' said the Padre, as if he was bossin' the whole show, instead of yours truly.

"'Just hold up a minute, your reverence,' said I, 'Tell me the conditions here an' with all due respect to yourself, I'll do the orderin'.' You see, Doc, I couldn't let a cassocked Padre come a-bossin' my rangers, me bein' a Methodist, — leastways I

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was started that way, an' wound up by bein' Sheriff of this cussed county, which is worse. The Padre took it very quietly an' just said, 'I don't want to expose your whole force, Captain. A few men can render me enough help until the relief comes from El Paso.'

"'I'll give you fifteen,' I said, 'an' the rest of us will straighten up things in general a bit.' I put it up to the tribe for ten volunteers to go with the five that had been picked out first, an' told them to move one yard forward. The whole column moved forward, an' when the First Luff looked at them a moment later the column was as solid as before.

"'Well, damn my eyes!' he bawls, 'Ain't there a man in the whole bunch?' An' with his neck an' face the color of a turkey gobbler's comb, he reaches for a gun. 'Oh, shut up, Jim,' I said, 'They've all offered for the job.' That closed him out.

"The fifteen went off with the Padre, an' the rest of us got busy around the town. It only covered about an acre. We corralled some chickens an' soon had a chicken dinner with corn cakes an' coffee for the sick folks, an' mighty glad they was to get it, too. The Padre had tried to do the cookin', nursin', an' everything else, but it was a little too much for him.

"We'd pitched camp a short ways out of town an' shortly after we'd sent the grub in, I saw the Padre headed our way. As he came nearer he looked to be a mighty sick man. 'Got it,' says I to myself, as I started toward him. He waved me back, sayin' he'd just come from a sick bed, an' I might get the smallpox from him, but I wasn't worryin' about that, 'cause, you see, Doc, I'd taken a great shine to that Padre. From what the boys had told me when they came out for the grub, that man was a 'white' man all the way through, an' while I don't go much on 'sky pilots,' I'll take off my hat to the kind of 'sky pilot' he was in any county I meet him. It ain't the kind of pious talk a fellow puts out, Doc, but the way he lives it that keeps the herd straight, an' the Padre showed down — that's what he did. I just got to him in time to grab him as he collapsed. He was clean played out, an' bein' a sickly kind of man, was no way fitted to do all that he did do before he got word up to El Paso.

"I picked him up and carried him down to the creek an'

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sprinkled water on his face, the First Luff fetched some chicken broth in a panniken an' hustled off to the medical chest — we did our own doctorin' in the Rangers in those days — for some whisky. I got a few drops down his throat an' in a few minutes he opened his eyes an' said somethin' about bein' called away from his sheep when they needed him most. I don't know just why he called them Greasers sheep, 'cause a Greaser's a Greaser, an' if I was goin' to call him any other name, I'd call him a snake. But it seemed to worry the Padre a heap, an' then he said he'd hate to die without the consolation of the rites of his church.

"'Oh, durn my cats, Padre,' I said, 'You're not all in yet, by a jugful. Brace up, man, we'll get you up to camp, an' a few hours' rest will do you a heap of good. Have a good sleep an' you'll be as good as new.' But he said that God had called him an' the big tears ran down his cheeks at the thought of leavin' those sick Greasers when they needed him most.

"Well, I felt pretty durn bad myself, Doc, 'cause you see, I was sort of in the dark about the rites of his church, an' so I couldn't make an offer of puttin' him over the 'Divide' the way he'd like to go, so I says, 'If you're dead sure you're goin' to cash in, Padre, I'll stand by an' do anything for you that a 'white' man can do.

"He didn't say anything for a few minutes. Then, reachin' inside his cassock, he pulled out a picture, an' holdin' my hand, told me he wanted me to find the woman of that picture an' give her a message from him. I gave him a little more whisky an' broth, an' motioned away some of the boys what had gathered around. He rested a minute after swallowin' the broth, an' then began to talk in a weak voice.

"He told me the woman had been his wife some years before, an' instead of raisin' a family as a decent woman should, she'd just raised the devil, an' wound up by skippin' out with a cattle rustler, takin' the kid with her. He could get no trace of her anywhere, an' broken-hearted, he had joined a brotherhood of priests that were tryin' to keep the Greasers straight along the Rio Grande. For years he hadn't heard of her until just before the smallpox hit his town, when he heard she had come back to El Paso an' was runnin' a joint that wasn't in the Sunday-school

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line — not by a jugful. He'd made up his mind to get the boy away from her an' was just ready to go to the courts when the smallpox hit his town an' he had to tie down there. He gave me a message of forgiveness for her an' to tell her to bring the boy up decent an' try an' make a 'white' man of him.

"Well, the good Padre didn't last long. He was just worked an' worried to death. His heart went back on him along toward sunset an' he died, with his crucifix against his lips, an' a smile that was just like a mother's blessin'. We buried him alongside his church, in a shady spot where the birds he used to feed could sing to him all day long.

"Not havin' any Catholics in the bunch, eight or ten of them bein' Protestants an' the rest heathens, we were kind of stood up as to the proper kind of send-off to give him, until Jim Thomson, the First Luff, said, 'Doggone it, Cap, he was a Ranger of the Lord, warn't he? We'll give him a soldier's funeral! An' we did, with three volleys an' 'Taps' at the wind-up.

"The doctors an' nurses came a few days later an' we pulled our freight for El Paso. I hunted up the woman, an' she was a sizzler all right. Must have been a fine-looker in her younger days, but what with booze an' a continual raisin' of the devil she made a mighty tough show-down when I struck her trail.

"She laughed in my face when I gave her the good Padre's message about the kid, an' said she'd raise him any way she durned please, an' when I pointed out to her that it'd be considerable difficult to keep a boy straight in the bunch she was runnin' with, she laced into me with all kinds of abuse. I never laid my hands on a woman yet, Doc, but I came mighty near it that day an' I gave her some Texas talk that didn't put any polish on her kind.

"Well, that's about all, Doc, 'cept that one of the fellows that's gone down to the calaboose is the Padre's son. He'd kept the picture I carried to El Paso years ago, 'cause there was some writin' of his father's on the back. The boy's kept straight in spite of his mother, an' older heads led him into the hold-up affair. I've had a talk with him about his father an' if you should hear a fellow hittin' the breeze for the county line about moon-up tonight, forget it, 'cause he'll be on the Sheriff's best bronc' an' I sort'r

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think 'twill kind'r please the Padre to know the boy's been given a chance."

The Sheriff looked off toward the snow-capped hills, as he finished, and said, meditatively, "A 'Ranger of the Lord'; Yes siree — that's what he was — an' his smile was just like my dear old mother's blessin' that's stuck to me all these years."

The Doctor looked at the sun-browned, square-jawed face and caught a light in the keen, gray eyes, that revealed to him why the Sheriff was called "white" by every man, woman and child in the county.

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God's Kiss.*

BY JEAN MAHAN PLANK.

DEACON RAMSAY, sitting at high noon, in the little grape arbor, looked toward the side door of his large, white, green-shuttered house. "The Child" came running down the graveled path. One tiny hand waved a greeting, and the forefinger of the other was laid against her pouting lips in a gesture of secrecy.

She clambered upon the board bench, snuggled up close, and leaned with the deacon against the big elm trunk, which served at once as a back for the seat and a pillar for the arbor. Then she waited for questions.

The deacon crossed his long, thin legs. The circular lines around his mouth deepened instead of relaxing. He passed his lean fingers through his closely-brushed, iron-gray hair, and sighed. The Child had brought the sunshine, but the dark shadow that had walked by Joel Ramsay for two years, — dim and shapeless at first, now looming, black with menaces, — obscured the brightness to his shuddering soul.

The little one touched his arm. He was forgetting her, an indignity without precedent in the two years since the waif of three was adopted by the childless couple. From the first turning of the rose-bud face toward the deacon, the plump baby had marked him for her own. The wife, with her delicate lace caps, and neat, quiet ways, was Authority, gentle though very real; but the stern, precise deacon was nothing but a slave, or playmate at will.

Feeling her touch, he looked down at the astonished little face.

"What has happened, Blossom?" he asked, speaking the pet-name awkwardly. None but she had ever heard him use it; to his wife and others, he always said "The Child."

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Blossom nestled closer, and smiled with bright merriment. "I was naughty yesterday. I went to Her drawer and took out my little-half-a-glass-locket and played with it all day. Then I put it back."

"Does She know it?" asked the Deacon, gravely.

Blossom shook her head.

"You know," said the deacon, "she doesn't like you to play with it, because it was among your things when — when the Almighty sent you to us." Joel Ramsay seldom became so familiar with the Power above as to say "God."

The little girl tossed her dark curls. "Maybe Awmighty wants me to have it." She looked sidewise at her companion, tentatively.

"You'd better tell Her," suggested the deacon, ignoring the theology.

"To-day?" Blossom leaned forward with elaborate surprise. "Yesterday was a long time ago. To-day I am good; I would not take my little-half-a-glass-locket to-day. If I tell now, I will spoil to-day."

The deacon stared at her. The baby philosophy might serve to dispel his own black shadow. If he could but think so! Had even the Child become a tool to tempt him to further makeshifts?

He turned to her with sudden fierceness. "Go at once," he cried, harshly, "before it is too late — go and tell Her what you have done!"

He seized the Child's arm and lifted her off the seat.

The little girl looked up in dismay as her *fidus Achates* thus suddenly became a Nemesis. She ran, as fast as her slender, white-stockinged legs could carry her, toward the house.

The man wiped his forehead with a colored silk handkerchief. By not letting the Child off, he was forced to the consistency of not letting himself off. Moreover, hadn't even Blossom felt, in spite of her being "good to-day," the necessity of telling some one? He had been her makeshift.

Yellow June roses, along the front picket fence, moved languidly in the breeze. Their perfume sickened him. In the spreading lilac bush, four finches moved about upon the twigs, like pawns on a chess-board. Their sweet gossiping made the deacon turn his head away despairingly.

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"I am desolate," he murmured, and with crude simile, "as desolate as a cornfield after the harvesters have passed."

The Child returned, walking slowly, her face filled with awe. She stopped before the deacon and folded her little sunburned hands upon her breast. A bee, humming through the arbor, alighted upon her lip as upon a flower. She scarcely noticed, as the man brushed it away.

"Well?" he asked.

Blossom took a breath, and gasped: "She *kissed* me!"

The deacon stared again. Suddenly he seemed to choke. Blossom gazing at him, saw tears gather in his pale gray eyes.

"I wonder," he said, and his face became child-like, — "I wonder if God would kiss me, if — " His voice died away.

Blossom seemed to comprehend that here was need for sympathy. In an instant she was upon the deacon's lap, encircling his neck with her slim, brown arms. Her face against his, she crooned one of her bye-low songs.

Hannah rang the dinner-bell. Hand in hand, the pair in the arbor went slowly up the walk.

Within the dining-room, cooled and darkened by closed shutters, Mrs. Ramsay, in her soft, second-best black silk, stood by a window, chasing relentlessly the one daring fly that had ventured to explore the immaculate domain of the best house-keeper in Meadow Centre.

"This is a rascal," she said in soft apology, as the deacon and Blossom stood waiting.

The fly escaped into the kitchen. Mrs. Ramsay looked after it thoughtfully and murmured: "I guess that will answer." Leaving one row of slats turned to throw light upon the table, she took her seat behind the urn, and smoothed, with a pair of delicate hands, the straight, white apron tied about her thin, long waist.

The deacon, in a detached manner, sat opposite, while the Child climbed into a high-chair, adjusted her checked bib, and peeped through the open shutter to where white clover grew in thick plats in the grass.

"Father, why do green trees cast purple shadows?"

The deacon started, and looked at her curiously. In his surprise, he spoke unawares.

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"Abram used to ask just such strange questions."

At this mention of the name of the deacon's artist brother, a name that had not crossed his lips in years, Mrs. Ramsay threw one swift glance toward her husband, then dropped her eyes to her plate, while a deep flush stole over her faded cheek.

"Hannah," said the deacon, with unaccustomed briskness, "bring some bread."

The girl, aggrieved, pointed to a platter piled with slices near his hand.

Mrs. Ramsay shifted the urn nervously, saying with abstraction: "I guess that will answer."

A silence ensued, which was not broken until the end of the meal, when the deacon donned his wide-brimmed straw hat and made the sound that was usually accepted as a leave-taking.

Down the street he went, with stiff even steps, past the row of little frame buildings in which was his own store. His purpose was a grim one; interest in ordinary affairs was in abeyance. He entered the one-storied, brick bank-building. The wickets were closed, as the clerk had not yet returned from dinner.

Waiting with stern patience, Joel felt vaguely that the sordidness about him accorded more truly with his condition of mind, than the mocking beauty of yellow roses, singing birds, and human tenderness. Through the window, he saw the wooden side of the next building, against which was outlined a dingy step-ladder and the faded rags of a former decoration. The bank's open door revealed, across the hot, narrow, unpaved street, shabby store-fronts, their windows piled with wares without either order or taste. A meek-looking Indian, with a wistful smile upon his very bronze countenance, offered deprecatingly, from his wooden pedestal, a package of cigars. Within the bank, on the dusty tiled floor, stood groups of dejected-looking women, their soiled, badly hung skirts cut with a pitiful attempt at fashion.

The bank-clerk returned, — a gray-haired man, who had held the same position for a quarter of a century, without a thought of bettering it. He was considered prosperous, and was prominent in everything social and religious in Meadow Centre. He greeted Joel Ramsay with solemn cordiality.

The severe lines about the deacon's mouth did not relax.

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"I want you to come to my house, Brother Simpson, tonight, at seven o'clock — you and your wife."

Simpson assented gravely. He asked no questions, but he knew that people did not entertain impromptu in Meadow Centre.

The deacon left the bank and went on down the street over the board sidewalk upon which the townspeople had learned to walk with toes well in air. Deacon Brand's wife leaned from a wooden balcony, and called to a Jersey cow, half a block away. As the animal trotted toward the voice with the docility of a well-fed kitten, Joel delivered his invitation to Mrs. Brand, and received her cheery acceptance.

He passed through the circular "city park," across which a woman could throw a stone. The fragile board band-stand was sardonic in its suggestions of bygone celebrations. Opposite the park, he entered the cool, shabby parlor of the little frame hotel, with its dusty chairs and tables, gaudy "air-castle," faded hair-cloth sofa, full of hills and valleys, and its hanging oil lamp, whose smoke had tinted the ceiling with dark frescoes.

The proprietor waddled in, pulling down his shirtsleeves.

"Brother Miller," — Joel's voice seemed to have acquired, in the repetition, a distant monotone, — "I want you to come to my house to-night, at seven o'clock — you and Sister Miller."

The proprietor gave a hitch to his trousers, snapped the elastics about his arms, and, being a retired seaman, said, in a big voice: "I'll be on deck."

Joel sought the preacher and the remaining deacons, and then turned his steps toward the outskirts of the town.

The cemetery was ordinarily regarded as a pleasure-resort by the lovers and holiday-seekers of Meadow Centre; but the deacon knew that, at midday, it was the only spot in which he could have an hour undisturbed. It was a lonely prairie graveyard, where many scattered wooden headstones relieved a few pretentious lots filled with evergreens and marble slabs. The prairie, nevertheless, has her own hour of beauty, and June roses challenged the wild-flowers to cover sunken graves, while the Prairie Queen rioted with abandon over shabby trellises.

In the Ramsay lot, so tidy as to suggest that Mrs. Ramsay's house-keeping extended even out here, was but one grave, its

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carved marble headstone the handsomest in the cemetery. The deacon stopped before it and mechanically read the lettering:

ABRAM RAMSAY,
Aged 32 years.

The townspeople had marveled, three years before, at the generosity with which Joel Ramsay had surrounded the burial of his profligate brother, who had indeed, even in his death, brought only disgrace to his name. An artist he was, in truth, but Art is ready to lead either up or down, according to the pleasure of her votaries.

Joel knew that there had been a wife. When, however, news had come from a cheap lodging-house in Denver that Abram Ramsay was lying there dead, the artist had been separated from her for over a year.

The deacon made efforts at the time, to find the wife; he would have been glad to send her a hundred dollars. Now, he thought, as he stood with a quivering face, gazing at the lonely headstone, how glad he would be to give many hundreds — yes, all his possessions would not be too much — to buy back, for his newly-awakened soul, the right to love and beauty.

He gave no sign of the unusual way in which he had spent the afternoon when, at supper-time, he once more entered his own house. The long frock coat of the early sixties was buttoned as snugly as ever, and the deacon's dignity had not lost its precision as he hung up his hat, saying to Mrs. Ramsay, with quiet dryness:

"There'll be some folks here to-night; the pastor and deacons with their wives; Brothers and Sisters Simpson and Miller. Better open the front door, and seat them in the parlor."

The wife accepted his directions in her usual modest silence. She looked at the seam the Child was overcasting, and remarked calmly: "I guess that will answer."

In silence, too, save primly polite greetings, she ushered the guests at seven o'clock, into the big square parlor, while the deacon sat upon the front porch, and bowed with constraint as the visitors came up the steps.

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The little girl, in her stiff, new percale, stood by her adopted father's side. With childish intuition, she had asked for her best wax doll, which was brought out only for occasions of state. She held it quietly, without the ardent caresses usually lavished upon the old china one, and her little face was drawn into an infantile likeness to the deacon's expression.

The latter heard, through the open windows, the muffled moving of chairs over the velvet carpet; the rustle of silken skirts as the women adjusted themselves to the straight-backed seats; the rich, full voice of the pastor; the cackling chatter of two or three old men, like the rattle of dead leaves which still cling to the bough; and then he felt the dead silence which settled awkwardly upon the company.

He arose and entered the parlor, the Child close at his heels. He walked to the white marble mantel, pushed aside with his foot the shells which lay about the grate, and faced the company. Blossom, seated upon an ottoman, hugged the doll tightly and glued her gaze to the deacon's face.

The air was becoming warm and heavy, from the shaded oil lamp on the marble-topped table, and the stifling odor of new crape from Mrs. Simpson's mourning-gown. The expectant faces turned toward Joel appalled him; he closed his eyes.

When he began, "Brethren and Sisters," his voice seemed far away; yet with the next words, he felt a sudden yielding of iron bands about his heart. Opening his eyes, he looked freely into each face in turn.

"I've called you here to-night to be my judges. Ten years ago, when my father died, back in York State, he left a will giving his entire property, ten thousand dollars, to me.

"With the will was a letter, directed in my name. This letter spoke of my brother Abram, who had run away from home, some time before. In case Abram returned within a year, I was asked to turn over to him five thousand dollars.

"The year expired. On the day after, I threw the letter into the grate. The paper curled under the force of the blaze,"— Joel had forgotten his surroundings, —"I watched until it lay on the wood, shapeless and black."

He paused. "That very night, Abram came home. He had

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just heard of Father's death. I showed him the will. He was half-intoxicated at the time, —" The deacon stopped and cleared his throat. "He begged for a little money, and I gave him twenty-five dollars. He left as suddenly as he came, and no one knew that he had been back.

"We removed to Illinois soon after. I never saw him again, although I learned that he had sobered down and was married. Later, came the news of his disgraceful death."

Joel hesitated. A cooling, dew-laden breeze freshened the room with the scent of roses climbing across the west windows.

"I have always meant to walk upright before the Lord; and I think the law would say that I had acted justly.

"But things look different to me now. A year after Abram's death, by the will of the Almighty, the Child was given to us."

The deacon's brow was moist. His task grew harder.

"Brethren," he cried, in a sudden passion of emotion, "I feel to think that the hand of the Lord has been upon me since then. He has opened my eyes. Whatever the law may say, I know I robbed my brother!" He threw out his hands. "I can stand it no longer! I've hunted everywhere for his wife, thinking to ease my conscience by making full restitution to her, but I can't find her. There is no way to make it right. You must judge for me — I put myself, in the name of the Lord, in your hands!"

Trembling, he drew his silk handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped his brow and eyes. The minister coughed; the deacons shifted their positions awkwardly.

There was a rustle of silk. Mrs. Ramsay had arisen to her feet. Her cap-ribbons shook and her thin hands twisted nervously a cambric handkerchief; but when she spoke, it was in the same tone of gentle apology that she used when the tea was a trifle strong.

"I guess I ought to have told, long ago, something that I found out when the Child came to us. You know her mother was an unknown sick woman who was put off the train here unconscious. As nothing could be learned about her, she died at the poorhouse and we took the Child.

"Among the things that the mother left, was the half of a small glass locket — a sort of keepsake, I presume, for it was

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wrapped in cotton in a little box tied with white ribbon. I remembered seeing something like it in the trunk that had come with Abram's — body — the year before. So I looked in a box into which I had put his watch and all the little things he seemed to set store by, and I found the other half of the glass locket, — the two pieces fitted exactly.

"Then I looked closer at all his things. There was the framed daguerreotype of a baby, and anybody could see that it had been a likeness of the Child.

"I noticed Abram's watchguard, which was braided of hair, of a peculiar dark reddish color.

"That afternoon, I went out to the poor-house, and got talking with old Nancy Bardwell, — you know she was with the Child's mother when she died. Nancy remembered the mother's hair; she said it was very long, and of a dark red, — mahogany color, Nancy called it; and so is the watch-guard, just that shade.

"I've thought every day that He would see that the Child is growing to look and talk like Abram. I didn't say anything to Him, as I knew he felt hard on account of Abram's wild ways. I thought he might refuse to keep the Child, and — " a natural womanly tenderness broke through the habit or reserve — her voice shook; — "I wanted her! — If restitution will bring comfort to Him — " She fell back upon the homely phrase, — "I guess that will answer."

She sank into her seat. There was a murmur of relief among the men; of sympathy among the women; the pastor exclaimed with fervor: "Praise God!" They all arose and pressed forward.

Joel Ramsey, who had stood as if turned to stone during this recital, fell upon his knees and threw out his arms to the Child.

Blossom sprang toward him, stumbling over her forgotten best doll. The awed rapture in his face touched her little soul as a thing familiar. She put her lips close to his ear with the wondering whisper:

"Did God kiss you?"

"Yes!" he sobbed, and caught her to his breast.

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Three of the Third.*

BY FREDERICK FERDINAND MOORE.

KERRIGAN knew that the fatal post and relief had fallen to him — Post Number Three of the third relief. He would be the sentry on duty from midnight until two o'clock and would have to patrol the trail which led into camp through the dreaded jungle.

Four men had already been brought into camp, shapeless masses of flesh and bones, from that post. They had been cut up in the trail. A Moro with a double-edged, twisted creese, is an artist at killing, but he mars his work by overdoing it. A dead man prefers to be found in one place, but a Moro — well, the simple act of slaying does not satisfy a Moro.

Kerrigan felt every eye in the guard detail turn to him in sympathy as the sergeant named him as the sentry on Post Number Three for the third relief. That was when the Moro was accustomed to do his work.

The sergeant watched Kerrigan out of the corner of his eye as he pronounced the words which he felt were sending the soldier to certain death, but Kerrigan never flinched. In the morning he had helped bring in from that post what had been his "bunkie." The tin rice boiler creaked and complained from the load, and every step of the way Kerrigan swore vengeance — softly, and through locked teeth, as a man does when he means what he says.

There was a rumor in the troop that Kerrigan had asked to be detailed for guard, and was going to volunteer to take the third relief, but the first sergeant refused to discuss the matter.

In fact, the whole affair was tabooed in camp. The commanding officer refused to take any action to prevent the killing of his men. He could have ordered the guard doubled on that post and had two men stand the watch, but there was no reason why the

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boloman would not transfer his attentions to some other post. To acknowledge that Post Number Three was more dangerous than any other post would cause a panic among the men. The troop was facing a crisis, and officers and men knew it. They had to do their duty — they had to walk that post — they had to bring in what they found in the trail or be brought in themselves. They were soldiers, and that was soldiering.

That afternoon Kerrigan sat around in the guard room and smoked and polished his rifle barrel — inside. He filled his belt with cartridges and examined each one carefully. He oiled the mechanism of the magazine and sought for dust in the grooves and dusted each part carefully with a tiny brush.

When mess call for supper sounded he went to barracks and arranged his things in his locker. He made several little bundles and wrote a name on each bundle. He wrote a letter and put it in his locker and called Trumpeter Graydon.

"I wish you would keep the key of my locker to-night, Trump. I'm on guard — Three of the Third." He smiled calmly and handed over the key. Graydon did not dare to look in his face, but he shook Kerrigan's hand as he took the key.

"Oh," said Kerrigan, suddenly, as if the thought had come to him at that minute, "I think you blow Taps prettier than any other trumpeter in the regiment. Now, if I was to pass in my checks in the army, I would be happy if I could know that you were going to blow Taps over me when they fire the volleys."

"There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you, Kerrigan — come on to the mess hall and get your chow."

The troop was at supper in the rude native building which served as kitchen and dining-room when Kerrigan and Graydon went in. The chatter ceased as Kerrigan sat down, and he knew that every man in the troop was watching him.

"Oh, Kerrigan!" said the saddler, who lived at the stables and did not know what the others did, "The ice boat will be in from Manila in the morning and those boxing gloves will come. You want to be — "

The quartermaster-sergeant kicked the saddler under the table.

"Say, what's the matter with you? Gone loco?" demanded the saddler, fighting mad in an instant.

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The quartermaster-sergeant whispered in his ear and the saddler dropped his eyes to his plate and attacked the stew. If Kerrigan had not been there the troop would have pitched the saddler through the window.

"I'll be down to-morrow afternoon and box you ten rounds," said Kerrigan, and everybody laughed, or started to, for they were not quite sure they ought to laugh.

Kerrigan ate but little, and felt that his presence was casting a gloom over the men. He knew they wanted to talk about him and what was before him, just as he had talked about the others who had been on the jungle post.

He got up from the long table and walked to the door, rolling a cigarette as he went. At the door he stopped and turned suddenly. Every man, looking at him, saw by the light of the cocoanut-oil lamps that he was pale.

He looked down the long table and saw the men who had fought with him through the Philippine campaign — the men who were left. The cook was standing in the door of the kitchen and the cook's police were making a show at serving the tables. They were all looking at Kerrigan and felt that he had eaten his last meal in the troop.

It was as if an audience waited to hear some great man speak. Kerrigan leaned over to the smoking lamp and lit his cigarette. His lips trembled and the cigarette fell to the floor. He picked it up and lit it again, this time with his teeth clinched, and they saw the muscle on his jaw standing out as he turned his profile.

He hitched up his cartridge belt and pulled on his gauntlets.

"Boys," he said, "I've soldiered in a good many outfits in this Yankee Doodle army, but H troop of the Second Cavalry is the best troop in the whole outfit."

He went out and they watched him through the windows as he crossed the parade ground to the guard house in the dim afterglow of the tropical sunset. The supper was tasteless and the conversation lagged.

A recruit left the table and began to whistle softly before he was out of the mess hall. The first sergeant reprimanded him sharply, and the men did not know which one to thank most — the sergeant or the recruit.

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"Number One — twelve o'clock."

The corporal of the relief roused himself as he heard the sentry at the guard house call midnight. He listened to the various outposts sending back their "All is well," and then called the relief.

Kerrigan was lying on his back on his cot with his hands folded across his breast and his hat over his face. The corporal shivered as he thought how like a dead man the sleeping soldier looked in the ghastly light.

He felt like an executioner calling a condemned man as he touched the sleeping figure. Kerrigan rubbed his eyes and sprang to his feet. He took a long drink from the can of distilled water, dashed the tepid stuff in his face and fell into the waiting line.

Outside the night was black. They could hear the pulse of the ocean beating on the beach. A lizard was croaking dolefully from a banyan tree and, as they plunged into the jungle, unseen things rustled in the foliage, reptiles glided away and insects chirped shrilly. The air was warm and heavy with the scent of decaying vegetation, blossoms, and the fever-fog rising out of the ground.

Three of the Second halted them in the trail and Kerrigan received the special orders of the post. The relief marched away silently, cursing the discipline which prevented them from staying with Kerrigan and waiting for the fiend with the creese.

Kerrigan moved up the trail and stopped. He took his carbine from his shoulder and held it ready for instant use. The hammer was back and the safety notch turned off. He opened the case of his watch and put his finger on the works to stop it.

After waiting until he had become accustomed to the usual sounds of the jungle, he coughed. It was an innocent little cough that did not disturb the silence. A man twenty feet away could not have sworn which direction it came from — unless he happened to be a keen-eared Moro.

Kerrigan waited several minutes and then he heard a slight rustle in the bamboo trees behind him. He had his finger on the trigger and he smiled in the darkness, but he did not turn toward the sound until he coughed again. He got on one knee and put the muzzle of the carbine down low, for crawling things are near the ground.

The rustle came again, in the same direction, but perhaps a

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foot nearer. Kerrigan estimated it to be ten feet away. He coughed again after a short time. It was an encouraging sort of cough, or should be, to a Moro with a creese.

Again he heard the leaves move. The vines grated against something which was gliding between them. It was progressing slowly. It consumed a minute in moving an inch, until it made one long continuous rustle, scarcely to be heard, as the slight noise blended with the little night sounds of the jungle.

The noise stopped. Had Private Kerrigan fallen asleep on his post? There had been a stifled yawn and then a peaceful, gentle snore, followed by the regular, deep breathing of a weary man asleep. At intervals there was a soft snore.

The vines moved again, and now the Thing was bolder, but still cautious. Foot by foot it glided nearer, growing more confident at each snore. Then the noise stopped. The creese was being made ready. It was the instant before the Thing strikes.

Kerrigan snuggled the butt of his carbine under his cheek, so gently that the movement was a caress. His eyes were of no use in aiming — his ears were guiding the carbine sight. Every muscle and nerve was so tense that it seemed they would snap. Great marbles of perspiration grew on his forehead, to break and run down into his eyes, but he did not mind them.

He was glad the troop could not see him, for he feared they might think he was afraid. All he feared was failure. He was trying to do his duty, and that was of more value to him than his life. A wave of gladness came over him as he realized that he had faced this Thing in the dark and was not afraid. He had never known before that he was absolutely fearless. He hoped that he might live so as to be able to enjoy the knowledge. Then he pulled the trigger.

There was no report. The carbine was still in his hands and he had pulled the trigger. He wondered if he had been mistaken. He pressed the steel again and it did not move.

A thousand little needles pricked his spine. His hair sprang up and quivered like a million tiny wires under a powerful magnet. His whole body was galvanized with fear. He was afraid now. He felt himself growing sick. He was unable to think. It did not occur to him that there must be some reason his carbine did

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not answer his pressure. All he knew was that he was helpless and that the Thing was before him preparing to strike. He wondered if the others had found themselves in the same plight. He had thought nothing could make him afraid, and he was sick from fright. A great lump rose in his throat and his frame quivered in a great, silent sob — because he was afraid.

The rustle came again. The fear vanished. He suddenly understood what was wrong. The safety notch! He had thought it open. It was closed.

He snapped it back and pulled the trigger. He saw the jungle open before him in the powder flash and a black shape almost at the muzzle of the carbine, prone before him. He caught the reflection of the fire which leaped from his gun, on a long, snaky bit of steel, pointed toward him. He fired again and again until his magazine was empty and then he tossed cartridges into the chamber in feverish haste and fired until his fingers were burned on the hot barrel.

He heard the other sentinels calling the corporal of the guard and "Boots and Saddles" sounding in the camp. He wondered why there was so much blowing of trumpets and shouting. He laughed at them and kept on firing.

When the guard reached him his ammunition was all gone and he was sitting in the trail laughing and sucking his burned fingers. They held the lantern in his face and he laughed at the flame and whispered to it, "I was afraid — I was afraid!"

"Hell!" said the sergeant of the guard, "What's the matter with him? Is his hair white, or am I loco?"

Kerrigan's hair was tinged with white. They picked him up, soothed him, and led him into the post, but still he laughed.

They found the naked form in the grass near where Kerrigan had been sitting. It was full of bullets.

In a few days Kerrigan was better, except that his hair did not turn black again.

The creese hangs over his bunk in barracks.

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The Magic Billiard Ball.*

BY EDMUND SMITH MIDDLETON.

IN the lull of an August afternoon Shaman Tuloc sat within the shaded door-way of his little shop, contemplatively smoking. From time to time a thin brown hand slowly stroked his long gray beard, while his dark, melancholy eyes looked far away into the distance.

Presently a shadow darkened the door-way, as a well-dressed stranger halted uncertainly and gazed curiously within. The old merchant rose courteously and with a wave of his hand extended a silent invitation to enter. Seeing that the stranger still hesitated, Shaman said in a tone devoid of eagerness, "Would the gentleman care to step in? It is not necessary to buy?"

An air of distinction in the old man's bearing, scarcely expected in such surroundings, excited the stranger's interest, and with an appreciative, "Thank you, if you don't mind," he entered.

The merchant noted the young man's eyes as they swept over his wares with half-observant gaze, and saw that his face wore the unsatisfied expression of one who seeks something greatly desired.

"It is not merchandise, the gentleman seeks to-day," said Shaman with kindly interest, continuing to search the other's face with his far-seeing orbs.

"Are you a fortune-teller?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"Not in the ordinary sense, my son," answered the aged merchant solemnly, "but much of the wisdom of the East is mine, and I have known the hearts of many men."

"If you help me," burst impulsively from the other's lips, "you may name your own price."

"I am listening, my son," responded Shaman with dignity, apparently unmoved by these glittering promises.

"My name is Philip Arden," began the young man in quick,

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excited tones, "and I am what people call rich. If my lot had been different, with my own way to make, I should doubtless have become a gambler, as the gaming instinct is strong within me. At times I am consumed with a perfect fever to excel at games involving chance and skill."

"Why do you tell this to me?" demanded the old man.

"You shall see," answered Arden, meeting his glance fairly. "Being wealthy, the gambler's love of gain does not appeal to me. Instead, I have devoted myself to games of skill, playing as an amateur with men of my own class. After making a fad of one game after another, I have settled upon billiards, to which I have devoted myself, heart and soul, for two years."

Just then a soft rustle of silk in the back of the shop, a sudden trembling of swaying curtains, and a quickly caught breath bespoke a listener in those regions. Shaman Tuloc never turned his head, although he heard. Arden was too absorbed in his story to notice. One look at those curtains would have disclosed a pair of peering eyes that shone like midnight.

"Go on," said the merchant, calmly stroking his beard, "There is yet something to tell."

"No lover could have been more devoted to his mistress than I to my favorite game. I wooed her early and late, playing my way up through the ranks at the Club, until last spring I defeated the strongest men and was hailed club champion. But alas! my joy was short lived."

"Your hand lost its cunning?" suggested Shaman Tuloc.

"No, not so. A more subtle hand than mine entered the lists," explained Arden with a touch of bitterness in his tone. "While my laurels were yet fresh, a stranger joined the club, a tall, slender man, with sallow skin and coal-black hair, which parted over a narrow, contracted forehead. His black, beady eyes were set close together over a long hooked nose, and his thin lips were shaded by a scanty black moustache. They say that those ratty weasel-like eyes could look into the shining depths of any jewel and rightly prize its worth. Enough for me that he could play billiards like a fiend. His long slender hands controlled the balls like a magician. He defeated me once, twice, thrice, — each time worse than before, — in a word, ignominiously. Let me van-

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quish him! Help me to defeat him!" cried Arden, moved to the depths of his being, "and I will give you what you like."

Shaman Tuloc smoked a while in silence, then rose from his seat and drew a small casket from a secret recess in the rear of the shop. The box was of fragrant sandal-wood, wrapped with cords and sealed in many places. Carefully removing these, he disclosed a small bundle of numerous layers of fine silk, concealing some object within. Very reverently the old man unwrapped the silken folds until there lay uncovered in his palm a small cylinder of ivory of wondrous quality, and without spot or blemish.

"My son, you behold a portion of the tusk of the Sacred Elephant of Siam, the most sacred of the holy herd. He went into the silence at the age of two hundred years and this relic possesses a mighty power. Listen to the words on the scroll. I will interpret." As Shaman Tuloc spoke he lifted from the casket an oriental scroll and reverently held it towards the light.

"To the pure and single of heart," he read in a low voice, "I will grant his wish."

"I will give any price, fulfill any conditions," exclaimed Arden in a choking voice, his whole form trembling.

"Look! What do you see?" the old man suddenly demanded, holding the ivory above his head.

"Only the ivory, nothing more," the young man answered.

"Look again!" cried Shaman Tuloc eagerly, "Look at the centre! What do you see now?"

"I see a delicate pink light shining through the ivory," answered Arden excitedly. "It seems to move and tremble like a rose swaying in the breeze."

"It is the soul of the sacred tusks!" cried Tuloc triumphantly, "the spirit, the life. Therein lies the power."

"What am I to do? Tell me!" demanded the young man.

"Bring from your club the finest ball you have. My hands shall fashion its mate in size and appearance from the sacred tusk. I will entrust the task to no other. In a week's time you shall have a ball, endowed with the living spirit of victory."

That same evening Arden brought from the club the desired model and the next day Shaman Tuloc began his self-imposed task. As he wrought his labor of love, patiently, silently, with reveren-

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tial skill, the slender, graceful form of his only daughter glided often through the parted curtains and hung over her father's shoulder with moist eyes and heaving bosom. More than once a rosy blush suffused her modest cheek as she recalled the young stranger's face and trembling voice. Then she murmured a silent prayer for her father's task and for the young man's victory.

On the eighth day the ball was finished, and to the instructed eye seemed to throb visibly with sentient life, as it lay, white and glistening, in the sandal casket.

"Take it, my son," said Shaman Tuloc, committing the box to him. "Let no other hand than thine use this sacred ball. Let no other interest divide your heart. Then victory will attend."

The report that Arden was to play his conqueror again filled the club house. An undefinable feeling was in the air that this game would possess unusual features — that it was a strife for mastery to an unusual degree.

The two men presented a remarkable contrast as they stood in evening dress at the end of the table ready to begin. One was the picture of cold, nervy cunning and calculation, the other, the best type of a gentleman player, brave, generous, skilled, eager for the fray. It was like night matched against day — the powers of darkness arrayed against the powers of light.

To the surprise of his ferret-eyed opponent, Arden, playing with the sacred ball, won the bank. The balls were spotted and the game began. The style of play was fourteen-inch balk line, one shot in. Without effort, by graceful, easy play, Arden rolled off run after run. His ball was absolutely under control and the audience was with him to a man, following his game with frequent applause. But, do what he would, Arden could not shake off his opponent. He answered run with run and invariably finished a point or two in the lead.

Arden, however, never lost confidence for a moment in his ball or the outcome of the game. As the players approached the goal, the 300 mark, almost abreast, but the dark man still in the lead, the excitement grew intense. With only eight to go, the latter ran six and missed on his 299th shot. A hateful scowl showed on his face but changed instantly to a triumphant smile, as he saw that Arden, who stood at 295, was left an impossible shot.

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Arden's ball lay tight against the cushions in one corner, the red ball in the same position in the far corner on the same side, and his opponent's ball against the cushion along the rail half way between the other two balls.

It, indeed, looked to be an impossible shot, but Arden, with unruffled confidence played a *massé*, whose like had never been seen on that or any other table. His ball, with a beautiful curve, spun to the ball half way down the rail, continued its journey in the same marvelously accurate fashion to the red ball, and counted, of course. The house fairly thundered its applause. The result of the shot was to leave the three balls lined up along the centre of the table. A second brilliant *massé* counted 297, and the remaining three shots were clicked off in rapid succession.

As Arden made the last shot, which meant victory for him, he felt his eyes drawn irresistibly across the table to the tier of seats opposite. His gaze rested on a pair of eyes shining with a radiancy he had never seen before. As he felt himself yielding to their power and started towards them, a strange thing happened. With a sudden click the wonderful ball, with which he had played and won, snapped asunder and parted into two pieces. As it fell apart, Arden saw an appearance like a delicate pink flame leave the ball, pass through the air towards the wonderful eyes, then over the head of Shaman Tuloc's beautiful daughter and away.

A minute later Arden was holding her by the hands and gazing at close range into those wondrous orbs. Tuloc hastened to the table and clasped the precious fragments of ivory to his breast.

Later that night, as he stood beside the beautiful Esther in her father's shop, Arden asked, "Why did the ivory ball snap and the pink soul flee away?"

"Because, my son, another love had come into your heart"—and then, as Shaman Tuloc looked on the young people, he raised his hands and said, solemnly, "The God of heaven bless you, my children!"

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The Hatchet-Boy*

BY ALBERT W. TOLMAN.

LEE SONG, squatting at midnight in a back seat of the smoker, drowsily inhaled the warm fumes of his cigarette, as he blinked through the lamplit reek on the lines of sleeping men sprawled along the sides of the car. His face, round, unwrinkled, guileless, proclaimed him an ordinary inoffensive Chinaman.

Under Lee's feet lay his straw extension case. It contained a Testament and several Chinese tracts, but also the tools of his trade — a bulldog revolver, a long, narrow knife and a stout cord.

A poor workman quarrels with his tools — but Lee Song never quarreled with his. The cord was new and unfrayed, the knife ground keen, and every chamber of the seven-shooter loaded. It was Lee's attention to details, joined with certain other admirable qualities, that had made him the foremost hatchet-boy of the Liu Kwen Tong.

Lee Song was an artist, either at premeditated assassination or impromptu murder. In his make-up was nothing spectacular, no boasting or bravado. Pistol-butt and knife-haft showed no notches — but he never failed to get his man.

When the Tong sends Lee Song after you, you are as good as dead already, and may as well get measured for your coffin.

On this special night the hatchet-boy was bound for a certain city to send a laundryman named Billy Wing to sleep beside his fathers. Why the Tong wanted Billy killed was immaterial to Lee. His business was simply to obey, to strike like lightning, like lightning to disappear.

The job promised to be a simple one. Lee smoked dreamily. His soul was at peace, save when he thought of his only son, who had died a month before. Every time the little white casket rose

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before Lee's eyes a devil who stood beside him night and day ran a sharp dagger into his heart. So often had the devil done this that the spot was very sore.

All night he journeyed, sleeping and waking, and at early dawn came to the city where lived Billy Wing.

There were few Chinese in the place, and Lee easily found Billy's laundry. Entering, he made the opium-smuggler's sign to the proprietor, who was wrapping up a shirt for a customer. Billy signalled back, his eyes glittering. After the customer went out, he asked eagerly:

"When?"

"To-night at ten," answered Lee. Men who smoke opium should not incur the Tong's displeasure.

The hatchet-boy ran an experienced eye over the laundry, sizing it up for the kill and the get-away. Ah, yes, that back room! The job over, he could shed his false queue, shift his clothes, and slip out of town on a freight like a common American tramp.

As he started out of the door, a little Chinese boy slipped in. The devil stabbed Lee sharply in the sore spot, for the lad was about five, just the age his own son had been. The hatchet-man's heart warmed toward him, and he turned back. Billy was upbraiding the child for being late.

"Son of a pig!" he screamed shrilly. "Where have you been so long?"

With a buffet he sent him reeling into a corner. The little fellow picked himself up without a whimper, and disappeared into the back room, rubbing his head. Lee's fingers drew up toward something in his sleeve. He wished it were ten o'clock at night now.

"'Tis Jing, the son of my brother, who died with his wife of the fever last spring," explained Billy. "Would the boy had died with them. He is not worth the food he eats or the clothes he wears. I can save no money while he is with me."

Lee replied nothing. Billy was going that night where money would not be needed.

All that day the hatchet-boy lurked in the outskirts of the city. He thought much of little Jing, and of Billy's cruelty to him, and the spot over his heart was very sore. But he could not kill the

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laundryman, until he received final orders, at seven that night, from the Tong.

Promptly on the hour he was at the post-office. The general delivery clerk handed him a letter containing a white sheet, entirely blank. Its upper right-hand corner showed a slight nail-mark. This was made by the right forefinger of the chief of the Tong. It signified that Billy should live.

Lee Song felt the devil's dagger again. He had planned that afternoon to adopt little Jing, after Billy had gone to his fathers. Sorely disappointed, he pondered, walking in the dusk. At last he came to a decision. He would kill Billy on his own account, and take the boy. True, it was somewhat irregular — but the Tong's rules did not forbid the avenging of a private feud, and Song took Billy's abuse of Jing as a personal matter.

At quarter to ten he started for Billy's laundry. A crowd of young hoodlums on a corner hooted and hustled the mild Chinaman, and turned him back. Song bore it meekly. But they would not have hustled him, had they known what lay hid in the secret pocket up his broad sleeve.

It was half-past ten before he tapped on the laundry door. Billy opened it quickly.

"You are late," grunted he resentfully. He did not enjoy being cheated of his smoke.

"Be content," smiled Lee Song. "You shall have enough presently."

In a box in the back room Jing lay asleep, curled up like a kitten. Billy did not even look at him. Out of his sleeve he shook two packets of opium.

"Try this, before you buy," said he; and Billy snatched it greedily.

Each produced his pipe, and they began to smoke.

For the first five minutes between whiffs, Billy talked of Canton; for the second five he spoke occasionally in monosyllables; the third five he smoked in silence; suddenly the pipe twitched from his fingers, and he tumbled back on the bunk. Surely, it was strong opium.

Lee Song, watching him cat-like, laid down his own pipe, and stood up. The time had come for Billy to join his fathers.

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There are pistol-jobs, and knife-jobs, and rope-jobs. This was to be a rope-job. From his sleeve Lee produced a cord. Skilfully slipping it round Billy's neck, he rolled him over on his face.

Crossing the rope-ends the hatchet-boy grasped one firmly in each hand. His arms stiffened. A strong, steady pull would soon do the business. But Billy snored peacefully on.

Lee Song's gorge rose. Disgust possessed him; not pity, for hatchet-boys know no pity. It was a job for a novice, a bungler, unworthy a finished artist.

"Bah!" he grunted. "It is too easy. I kill men, not pigs."

Contemptuously pulling out the cord he rolled Billy over again on his back. Then he stepped to the box where Jing lay curled, and shook him lightly.

"Come," he said.

The boy started up, looked at him a moment in sleepy wonder, then unhesitatingly stretched out his arms. The hatchet-man lifted him, and passed into the night.

Two hours later Lee Song sat in the corner of the smoking-car, bound for the great city. In his arms lay Jing, fast asleep, one hand tightly clasping Song's right forefinger, that terrible finger which had sent so many Chinamen to join their fathers.

The hatchet-boy looked down on the little black head in the hollow of his arm. He pressed the limp, thin body against his breast, and felt the quick-beating heart and the gentle breathing. His room in Mott Street would be brighter with this little fellow playing in it.

A wave of strange tenderness swept over Lee Song. Again the devil stabbed him, but his dagger was blunted. The sore place did not hurt so much. His lips were silent, but in his heart he said:

"It is good to have a little boy."

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"The Heart of God."*

BY JOANNA E. WOOD.

[This story, which appeared in THE BLACK CAT more than ten years ago, is reprinted to meet the demand of many readers and as a model for storywriters. Built of literary materials of unusual quality, and based upon a foundation of scientific truth, it embodies, besides those elements of human interest essential to a really great story—adventure, love and mystery—the rare merit in fiction of instructiveness, and while possessing the quality of a two-volume novel is told within the limits of a short story. THE BLACK CAT paid the author $500 for this tale.]

THREE men sat in a handsome office-like room in a London house, around a mahogany table across which questions involving millions of money had been decided.

The oldest of the three was a short little man, with white hair and red face, of choleric habit, evidently, and having a due sense of his own importance, which had been very great in India, and was still greater in the monetary world, for he was Sir Lucius Lang, sometimes an officer in her Majesty's Indian Service, and now known far and near as a financier. After having survived the fluctuations of the *rupee* for so many years, the vagaries of the stock market merely amused him.

Seated opposite to him was a tall, spare man, a man, one would have said, who knew accurately the location of his liver; he had a hook nose — there is much virtue in a hook — of a certain kind, but Arthur Godwin's hook was not Semitic, but of the type which attained apotheosis as an adornment of the Iron Duke. Therefore it indicated ancestors rather than speculative acumen; nevertheless, Arthur Godwin's favorite recreation was to come up to London and indulge in financial flyers.

Birds of various feathers these flyers were, and rarely showed homing tendencies, but flew away into the blue and rose perspective of speculative distance, never to return.

The man sitting between Sir Lucius and Godwin was a great contrast to his companions.

He was young, and brown, and lean, with a sunburnt mustache

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and a square jaw; his eyes were gray and very keen, and his whole appearance was that of a man who had often played for big stakes against heavy odds. Thought and action were simultaneous with him, and there was so much alertness in his pose as to suggest that he had lived among people not above suspicion.

His name was Allan Trask, and he was an American, if any nationality can be rightly given to a man of such cosmopolitan experiences. He had mined gold in California and opals in Mexico; he had sought silver in Peru and dug for nuggets in Australia.

He had lived on horse meat at St. Etienne, when the ponies injured in the mines had been raised to the surface to be converted into beefsteak; he had supped off grasshoppers in oil in Africa, and breakfasted off blubber amid the eternal snows, and rejoiced over kangaroo tail soup in New Zealand; — and when he found himself at a civilized table displayed discrimination in his drinking and ease in his deportment.

There had been a love story. Reversing national precedent, he had fallen in love with an English girl, and she with him; but there had been rumors, untrue but difficult to meet; his wild ways frightened her, and her people, spicing their tales of him with that devil's salt, a grain of truth, managed to prejudice her judgment (not her heart, for that never wavered), and so they parted. Perhaps Trask's pleading had not been very gentle; he thought of it sometimes and cursed himself for a brute, and entered into enterprises more and more hazardous, just to show the poor opinion he had of his own value.

But he came forth scathless from every danger, and the ache at his heart grew worse. Of all his exploits the last had been the most perilous, but he had succeeded, and the result was brilliant, literally, for it was represented by the magnificent diamond, worth a king's ransom, which lay like a lump of solidified fire upon the center of the table.

He had got it, no matter where, but at the cost of much money and the hourly risk of his life for weeks. Never before had this unsurpassable gem changed hands but at the price of many lives; dynasties had depended upon its possession; it had been the cause of wars, and conflagrations, and insurrections. Men and women

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had died mistaking its glitter, which dazzled their glazing eyes, for the gleams from the opening gates of paradise. Never before had European eyes beheld it, though the soldiers in India had heard of the glory of the "Heart of God," and many of them had marveled together over it, and wondered if the name was used figuratively, or if there was indeed in the possession of the priests a precious stone which merited the rhapsodies of the natives.

When Sir Lucius Lang left India he had brought with him an Indian servant named Tippoo, a child rescued from the sack of a temple of one of the occult faiths.

This child, gifted with all the subtlety and craft of the East, educated in the more practical, if coarser, ethics of the English, developed into a very handsome man, who, hung with rich Oriental stuffs in winter, or clad in snow-white linen in summer, acted as body servant to Sir Lucius.

He made curries and cooked rice with the art inherent in his race, and always stood behind Sir Lucius's chair at table. If Sir Lucius had occasion to punish Tippoo, he did so characteristically, for, after the regulation toast "to the army abroad" had been drunk, he would launch forth into a description of the Indian mutiny; and with a malignity which would have been fiendish, if it had not been so very justifiable, he described the treachery of the natives and the terrible punishments meted out to them. England's strong hand had fallen heavily in her righteous wrath, and Sir Lucius kept the memory of it alive in the heart of Tippoo, who, during the torture of these recitals, stood livid and trembling, enduring, it would seem, in his own proper person all the agony and humiliation meted out to his treacherous race. And after such an experience he would lie all night in a wide-eyed trance, for the vivid descriptions of Sir Lucius brought back to him with photographic accuracy the panorama of weird, terrible sights he had witnessed, crouched in the judgment hall of the sacred temple.

At first these memories were a meaningless phantasmagoria of horror to him, but as he grew older he began to decipher their import, and, remembering the gorgeousness of the temple, he began to calculate its worth; and whereas he had once trembled before these visions, he now sought them, and with his inherited power of

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mental concentration set himself to dive deeper and deeper into his childish memories. Thus he succeeded in unrolling the scroll of his experiences back to the very alphabet of his infantile impressions, and he studied their misty outlines till he could read clearly every symbol impressed upon the plastic tables of his memory. He could have told strange tales of the hatching of many devilish plans which ere long perfected themselves in deeds which appalled the whole civilized world; he could have told of the sowing of that fatal seed which bore a terrible blossom of blood and flame; he could have told who breathed forth that mysterious whisper, which, like the hissing of an unseen snake, ran all over India, bidding the brown people rise and slay; he could have told from whence came the strange cakes impressed with the mystic, omnipotent symbol, which were found one morning, three days before the mutiny, in every building wherein men dwelt in India, from the viceroy's palace to the fakir's hut. Mingled with these were other recollections — of priests filled with fanatic faith, who, ere they left their temple to kill and maim and torture, hid the treasure of their gods so cunningly that no mortal man could find it unaided; and piercing far, far back, he recalled how, with splendid procession and solemn promises of human oblations, they had taken the great Heart of God from the wooden statue which held it and hid it away. In the East the heart is supposed to be the genesis of thought, and these priests kept the Heart of God in a gilded wooden statue, to signify that the purposes of God are wrought through perishable mediums and perfected by poor mean mortals.

Tippoo remembered how, when the white unbelievers had visited the temple, they had passed by the wooden statue and gloated with greedy eyes over the gold and silver emblems in other niches; and he remembered, too, how the High Priest had gloomed after them, muttering to himself that the spirit of the true God did not dwell beneath the gay uniform of the English soldier, but beneath the bare brown skin of the humble priests, even as the great diamond Heart of God was hidden beneath the humble wood.

And one day Tippoo sought audience of Sir Lucius, and standing humbly before him divulged to him the secret of the Heart of God, told him where it was hidden, and offered to supply a map

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of the location, and sighed with melancholy gentleness as he concluded, "The old gods were perhaps false, but their hearts were good, and such things are greatly prized here, and are of much price."

Price! Sir Lucius thought he knew better than Tippoo the price of diamonds.

Now, to any one unacquainted with India, this tale would have seemed incredible, but Sir Lucius knew the incalculable riches of the temples, and knew that whenever he wanted it, the most miserable fakir by the wayside could command untold treasures; Sir Lucius had heard of the Heart of God, and there was no doubt in his mind that Tippoo knew whereof he spoke.

But Sir Lucius knew, too, better than most, the watchful dragons of cunning which guard even the ruined temples. He knew the armed silent shadows which grow, it would seem, out of the barren rock to steal after the rash investigator. An Englishman disappears, the vultures hover even more thickly than usual above the courts of the ruined temple, the natives see them and smile.

Sir Lucius had "considered with himself," and the result was a communication to Arthur Godwin, which brought that gentleman to town in a hurry, and after several hours' talk across the mahogany table they decided to finance an expedition of one.

It would seem the great difficulty lay here — the man.

But Sir Lucius thought he knew him, he suggested Trask; it was a niece of Sir Lucius with whom Trask had fallen in love, and of all her relatives, the old "fighting uncle" had been the only sympathizer.

Decency made him sympathize sneakingly, Trask was so strikingly ineligible; but, as the old man said with a whole-souled oath, "he feared neither the face of man nor the horns of the devil." To which his sister, the girl's mother, remarked austerely that the young man seemed "equally free from the fear of God." Sir Lucius opened his mouth, but remembering he was no longer a fire-eating soldier, but a peaceable land owner, closed it and grew purple in the face from repressed speech.

When the proposed search for the diamond was suggested to Trask he grasped at it eagerly.

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What was life worth to him? Nothing.

So with as sad a heart as ever left England, Trask "set his foot on the ship, and sailed to the other side of the world."

And there he had faced death in every form. From plague, and fever, and starvation; from knife, and poison, and ambuscade; from thugs, and reptiles, and wild creatures; from pitfalls, enchantments, and women, he had escaped and brought back the Heart of God.

And there it lay upon the table, undoubtedly the finest diamond in the world. And Sir Lucius had told Trask that his niece Edith had not spoken to him for months, since she had found he had some part in sending Trask into danger; and Trask's lean face glowed with a greater joy than he had felt when, on the throbbing deck of the liner, he had pressed the diamond hard against his breast, and seen the Indian shore grow dim in the distance.

The diamond had been shown to Tippoo, and he was promised a rich reward; but he trembled, and said that, though the old gods might not be powerful any more, yet he would not further anger them by taking money for having betrayed their secrets; it was indeed a terrible thing to have done. "But," he added in Oriental phrase, looking at his master, "love is stronger than fear."

"It is," said Trask below his breath, and for a moment his eyes stung as if with salt water.

The discussion between the three men was now as to the best method of selling the diamond.

Its enormous size forbade any private sale, and they were in no mind to be dispossessed by the crown. It would have to be cut up. It was certainly a terrible shame — still — it meant millions. They could have it cut into many pieces, and yet each would be perfect, and greater than the greatest solitaires.

It was enough to make a man's head swim, certainly talking of it made their throats dry.

"We will have a glass of sherry," said Sir Lucius, and rang for Tippoo.

He gave the order, to which Trask supplemented a request for a glass of water.

"What!" said Sir Lucius. Trask reaffirmed his preference, and Tippoo departed.

"They said once I drank," he said, "though I never was drunk

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in my life! But since then I've never tasted a drop, just to give the girl an unanswerable argument — if she cares to use it."

Sir Lucius gave him a great slap on the back.

"Well, drink the water! But it's the last in my house! I've wired for Edith and her mother in terms they won't disregard; they'll be here to-night, and you will have some time alone with Edith — if you care to use it."

Trask reached out his hand and Sir Lucius wrung it, and when he relinquished it Godwin's palm was waiting. They shook hands across the diamond — the slanting sun rays smote it into flame, and Tippoo entered with the sherry decanter and two glasses, and a huge crystal goblet of water. The three men raised their glasses to their lips; the two sherry glasses were put empty on the table, Tippoo placed them on the tray. A moment after Trask put down the glass of water half full, Tippoo placed it on his tray beside the other glasses. Trask looked from one to the other of the two men and then suddenly cried: —

"Where's the diamond?"

It was gone.

Tippoo gave such a start that the water in the half-filled glass leaped up in a little silvery wave. Then with the impassivity of the Oriental he turned away. Arthur Godwin's face was livid, Sir Lucius's eyes were suffused with blood and his face was purple.

Trask's eyes glittered fiercely.

"Wait," thundered Sir Lucius to Tippoo; "stand where you are." And while the Eastern servant stood in his white draperies, holding the tray in hands that did not quiver, the three men sought the floor, the table, their own persons — but the diamond was gone.

"Strip!" said Sir Lucius briefly to Tippoo.

With a kind of proud humility Tippoo obeyed. Nor was his master content till he stood nude, slender and beautiful as a bronze Hermes before them.

Inch by inch Sir Lucius searched the linen draperies, and the gorgeous silk girdle, and the flat straw slippers, then threw them back with a brief: —

"I was wrong."

Tippoo cast his draperies about him.

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"Does the Sahib will that I remain?" he asked, ineffable and touching reproach in his great eyes.

"No; go, Tippoo," said Sir Lucius kindly; a preeminently just man, he already regretted his suspicions.

With melancholy grace Tippoo picked up his tray and departed. He paused at the door.

"It is well that I should be punished by the Sahib's doubts. The great fathers are very angry. It is their vengeance upon me. They have taken back the Heart of God."

He closed the door and the three men looked at each other, and as they looked fear fell upon them — intangible fear of intangible things.

It was broad daylight; the sunlight streamed in at the window.

Trask had brought away the diamond from amid the most insidious dangers; it had been spirited away from beneath their very eyes. A blankness of mind fell upon them. They could not reason, for they had absolutely no hypothesis to go upon.

Suddenly Godwin rose. "I don't wish to be rude," he said, "but, frankly, Sir Lucius, I should be more comfortable out of here."

"I believe I should myself," said Sir Lucius.

Trask rose with them, but his face had grown very stern and set.

"Wait a moment," he said. "I risked my life fifty — no, a hundred — times to get that diamond, and now by some infernal diablerie it is whisked away from beneath our very noses, from between our very fingers, from under our very eyes, but I'll find that diamond again if it is on earth. All the magic in hell won't guard it against me. I'll find where that diamond has gone if I have to beg, a fakir in a breech-clout, along the Indian waysides. If you could guess what I've been through! The effort to get it, the unspeakable horror of its surroundings, the mental torture of fear, — for I've known that agony, — the dreadful danger of my return journey, the poisoned food, the benumbing smoke of deadly drugs creeping round me as I slept, and I've passed through these things to be bedeviled in broad daylight! It's intolerable!"

"My boy," said Sir Lucius kindly, "I had no real idea, after

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all, to what I was sending you. You will forgive me? Edith shall ask you, too, and I think she'll have something to say about the fakir idea. Though perhaps two can play at that game. But, seriously, it is Godwin and I who have failed in this scheme; and, after all, the speculation was not fair, for you hazarded life and limb, and Godwin and I only money, and when you brought the diamond back we failed to keep it. Come back to dinner, both of you, and don't worry over the thing. Edith will have plenty, and Godwin and I can scramble along. Eh, Godwin?"

"Yes, indeed," said Godwin heartily. "Yes, indeed."

Trask's face relaxed.

"Come back early; don't wait for the dinner hour. I say, *did* you ever know such a devilish strange thing?"

They stood for a quarter of an hour together, babbling like boys of their amazement, and then parted.

. . . . . .

Trask and Edith were definitely engaged.

Trask's face, which was so strong as to be almost brutal, quivered with tenderness as he bent above the girl whose love had been great enough to overcome her fear of his wild ways and stern face; and Edith knew that never again would he frighten her, for his second wooing was very gentle, and her timorous fingers nestled confidently in his strong, lean hand. Their engagement was not to be too long, but Edith's mother was determined to have it decently conventional; and often, as Trask strode away from his sweetheart, he felt a wicked wish within him that he could drop the old lady down a well or something, not with any desire to injure her, but merely, as he naively said to himself, to get her out of the way for a little while.

For he thought, with tender triumph, that if he held out his arms Edith would slip into them of her own accord, if she were let alone.

The intensity of his love had made his first wooing too stern; now it had come about that this fire eater trembled at the touch of Edith's fragile hands; only sometimes in the midst of her tyrannies a sudden fright would reassert itself, and then his new-found gentleness exerted itself to reassure her.

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But mingled with the glamour of his love dream there was always the stern resolve to find out the fate of the diamond.

Poor Tippoo had had a sad end.

From the day of the diamond's disappearance he had never been well. Afterwards the other servants said he had eaten nothing for days.

He grew thinner and thinner, an unnatural brilliancy dilated his eyes. He had fits of weeping over his master's doubt of him, and Sir Lucius reproached himself bitterly because of his hasty suspicion, and finally Tippoo began to ramble and grow incoherent in his speech, and one night he disappeared and could not be found. He had seemed greatly disturbed that day, muttering incessantly to himself, and declaring to the other servants that his gods and the great fathers were angry at him and were punishing him, and that he was not fit to live. These things were, of course, quite unintelligible to the servants, but Sir Lucius put upon them an interpretation which wrung his generous old heart.

He repeated them to Trask and Godwin, and all three decided that doubtless Tippoo had made away with himself.

Sir Lucius clung to the idea that he might have wandered off while he was not himself, and advertised far and near for any clue. The advertisement was widely spread, and attracted the attention of a rich East Indian student at Cambridge, who, after inquiring particulars from Sir Lucius, supplemented that gentleman's reward by a very liberal one; but poor Tippoo was never heard of. Meantime, Trask studied occultism with the devotion of a *Cheelah,* he found out every devotee in England, he trailed London from one end to the other in pursuit of promises of enlightenment, he consorted with greasy workers of miracles and frowzy mediums, and hobnobbed with fashionable and learned Theosophists; he sought out stray East Indians, and by guile and gold gained entrance to a cleverly contrived shrine where Buddha was adored in the heart of London as in the Eastern jungles; he read deeply, and spent his substance upon rare books of occult lore; he became an adept in magic white and black, and knew cabalistic words terrible to utter, but none of his cunning enabled him to find the whereabouts of the diamond, or to account for its disappearance.

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It is said that one who has ever dealt in diamonds can never free himself from their fascination; and after Trask's romantic association with what was undoubtedly the finest diamond ever brought to England, it is not surprising that his interest was sustained in the precious gems, and that he came little by little to know most of the prominent diamond men in the country. Thus it was that he found himself a guest at a great banquet given by and for diamond men. And very well he was entertained, though the continual talk about diamonds served to make the cogent subject of his unending search unpleasantly prominent in his thoughts. Just as he was slipping into a reverie he was brought out of it by an even heartier laugh than usual, and came back to the scene about him to find that a genial old man who had won wealth from the blue clay at Kimberley was telling stories.

"You needn't laugh," he was saying, "it's quite true! There was Hodgins at Kimberley; he built a house and plastered it outside with rough cast made from the mine waste, and after the rains washed the house it glittered in the sun as if it was frosted, and they picked out hundreds of pounds' worth of diamonds. It was that which led to the present system of searching. Those were great days! Once I went up country to the upper mines and came back minus all my kit but my shirt and trousers, but with half a pocketful of stones; for the excitement ran so high that they wouldn't leave the mines for anything, and clothes were not to be had for love or money. I got a regular sparkler for my watch. That was the time to live — but living was high, too, a guinea a bottle for Belfast ale! I remember Hodgins showing me the great 'Up-country diamond.' That was a gem like a gem! Why, Hodgins dropped it into a glass of water and it was so pure and flawless that you could not see it. It was as transparent as the water, and you'd never dream it was there; it made me perfectly nervous, it was so strange to see it disappear so utterly. A game of 'now you see it and now you don't' played with a diamond worth thousands and thousands of pounds."

Trask heard no more, for the long table with its brilliant lights and flowers, with its many guests and numerous attendants, faded from before his eyes; instead of the great banquet room he saw the little office-like room in Sir Lucius Lang's house; instead of

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the banquet board he saw the little mahogany table; instead of the long line of jolly men he saw the white face of Arthur Godwin, the purpling countenance of Sir Lucius, he saw this visionary scene in detail, and noted the little wave leap up in the crystal goblet which the gentle Tippoo held.

How simply he had duped them!

Palmed the gem, and dropped it into the water before their very eyes! No wonder he had been so willing to be searched.

This was the occult phenomenon which had so bewildered them. He remembered the symptoms of Tippoo's illness, and his disappearance, and could hardly conceal his wrath.

. . . . . .

The next morning but one Sir Lucius Lang, Arthur Godwin, and Allan Trask met again round the little mahogany table, but the terror of mysterious forces no longer made them uneasy; instead, impotent rage knit their brows.

"To think," groaned Trask, "that you two furnished the money, and I risked my life to bring that diamond within the reach of that brown beggar!"

Old Sir Lucius nearly foamed at the mouth when he remembered how he had reproached himself for his suspicions of the innocent Tippoo.

Arthur Godwin did not rage, but he had made one or two very lucky speculations, and he intimated that his check book was at Trask's disposal if he would look up Tippoo.

. . . . . .

Trask and Edith had been married five years, and they were the greatest chums in the world, — real comrades, going everywhere, doing everything, together; they had run over to Paris for Easter, and it seemed to them that the beautiful city, having put off the sackcloth and ashes of her Lenten penances, was more gay than ever before. They had been looking at the treasures of the *Rue de la Paix,* for they both had a liking for shop windows, and no windows are so enthralling as the jewelers'; and as they walked along the Boulevard they were attracted by the long line of people waiting to take their turn in entering to view the wonders of the "Cinemetagraphe," that wonderful development of the kinetoscope, which projects life-size figures upon a screen in such a

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manner that the real scene and events proceed before the eyes with every movement and gesture true to life. They saw the babies playing by the sea, they saw the blacksmith shoeing a horse, they saw the mischievous gardener turning his hose upon his friend, and then they saw the arrival of a train. They first saw the track stretching in two black lines, then the engine appeared, growing greater and greater till it passed out of sight, and the train halted, and then they saw the passengers descend. One of the first stepped from a first-class carriage, followed by a man who carried his rugs and hat box. He walked staight towards them along the platform till he was in the foreground of the scene; suddenly the changing picture was a blank; then another picture began, but neither Trask nor his wife saw it, for they had clasped each other's hands in strange excitement. They looked at each other.

"Are you sure?" asked Trask.

"Perfectly," said. Edith. "It was Tippoo."

For the man they had seen in the changing picture was Tippoo, but dressed in the regular traveling tweeds of an Englishman, and escorted by his valet. With much difficulty, Trask found that the photograph had been taken as a London train arrived at Folkestone to meet the Paris boat, some few months before.

Trask went back to England, and struggled to find some clue, but in vain; and old Sir Lucius raved afresh when he heard the story; in fact, the loss of the diamond itself had not enraged him so much as the idea that Tippoo had a valet.

A few months later Sir Lucius received a letter postmarked in India. It was very polite:

> *My dear Sir Lucius:*— I am about to give you the information for which you offered a reward of five hundred pounds some six years ago, but as your enterprise in sending to India for the Heart of God for me has made me very comfortable for life, I will not expect you to pay the five hundred pounds; I would advise you to apply it to the promulgation of intelligence among retired army officers, country gentlemen, and young adventurers. I dropped the Heart of God into the goblet of water I was holding, and it was very funny to see you looking for it when it was so near you. It is a great mistake to think we Eastern people have no sense of humor; I enjoyed this joke much better than you ever will. After leaving your house, I went to Cambridge, having quite sufficient money to establish me creditably at the University. I had ways and means of getting credit upon the Heart of God, which I need not explain. I amused myself much at Cambridge, and spent my vacations in Paris. (You don't go to the best hotels there, or I would

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surely have run across you.) As I say, I amused myself well in Cambridge, but I found nothing more entertaining than your replies to my letters of inquiry about myself. I was rather more liberal than you in my offers of reward. Still it is only fair to admit that I was hazarding my money on a sure thing. I have, as you see, returned to India, and am enjoying myself hugely; perfecting myself in the mystic lore of my race, and applying some of my university learning to its problems. I am a king in riches, a prince of pleasure; and I am greatly pleased to send you this intelligence of your Tippoo. Should you, or Arthur Godwin, or Trask, the heroic, ever care to come to India, depend upon it, you would be well entertained and your time fully occupied. In what school could an Oriental better learn to entertain the stranger within his gates than in such a household as yours? *I remember some of your dinners.* You need send me no word of your coming, for you will be welcome whenever and wherever you set foot upon Indian soil. My people know you well and wait for you, for I have sent them messages concerning you, and they were signed thus—"

Here followed a cabalistic symbol which made Sir Lucius shudder even in England, for it was the same dread hieroglyphic which had been imprinted upon the little ubiquitous cakes which told the brown people to unleash the tigers of the mutiny.

Sir Lucius Lang is a lion-hearted old man, and Trask needs no credentials of courage; but neither of them will ever tempt the tender mercies of the people of the Heart of God.

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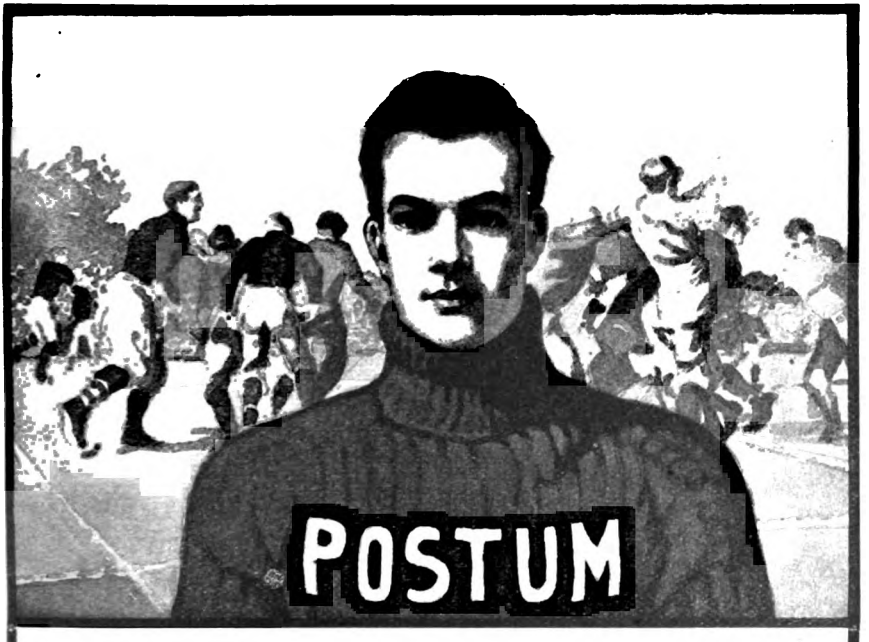

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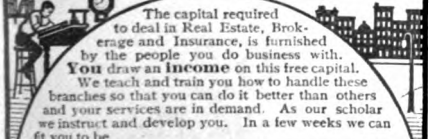

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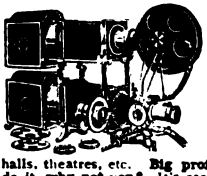

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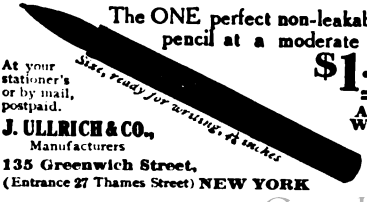

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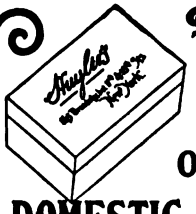

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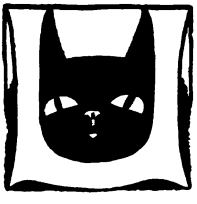
Pap Ellswick's Minnie.*

BY CHARLES McILVAINE.



NDER hemlocks, birches and laurels, under the sweep of spruce trees and white-limbed guardianship of sycamores, Blue Creek, West Virginia, pools its waters at the mouth of a giddy branch — Three-Mile.

When rain plays upon the mountains, or sun rests heavily upon snowfalls, or thundering clouds send deluges quickly into it, Three-Mile is wild; but ordinarily Three-Mile loves to loiter and ripple over its stone-ways with music and murmur. Blue Creek is compelled to capture it in all its moods, so, wisely gathers her waters into a wide, deep, brawny pool where Three-Mile at its wildest can leap and dash and tear, only to be conquered at last and settled into sober flow.

Pushed on and on from miles above, Blue Creek's waters — lazy as they are while waiting for Three-Mile — have to go somewhere. Somehow, they slip through the pool, laugh about it among the stepping stones of the ford, and then dance away, waving a happy good-bye.

Where the waters laugh, where the pool waits, is where I first saw Minnie.

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One August day I rode into the ford. My mountain nag, Bill, head down, was crossing to suit himself. Suddenly he stopped. His ears pointed straight ahead, betokening surprise. There was a child half way over the ford; not on its stepping stones, but wading alongside of them from lack of leg length to bridge their separating distances. Clad in bandless calico, her hair curly and free, with inquisitive brown eyes, chin put to one side as if afraid of splashes, a tucking up of dress above bare feet and brown knees, a coy shyness that was bewitching, she stood looking up at me.

Blue Creek waters, with impatient growl at the impediment of Bill's legs, passed under him as we waited for the little creature to go by without the danger of a ducking.

"Come ahead," she said. "I ain't afeared. I know you won't swash me."

The child's face was a marvel. It was not pretty, but there was something brave, reliant; such an implicit faith in it as she looked up at me and said: "I know you won't swash me," that I was captured.

"Certainly I will not swash you," I said. "Come on."

Even Bill turned his head with kindly look, which meant that he would not budge an inch until she was beyond his splash; and that one look put him in the motion of turning to follow her.

We watched her — Bill and I — until she reached the shallow ripples at Three-Mile's dimpled mouth; then she half turned to look back at us, batted her eyes at the dazzling glare of the mid-day sun, which left her shadowless, but lighted up every curl and cranny of her silky hair.

"Thank you, sir," she said. "Won't you turn back and eat a bite; it's noon."

There was a force in the invitation not to be withstood. Bill seemingly had anticipated it; for he had wheeled of his own accord. Involuntarily I said: "Yes, dear."

She gave me a smile that told her pleasure in my acceptance. She hitched her dress a higher tuck out of the way of the water's sport and said, "Come along."

"How far is it?" I asked.

"Jist to the cabin yander. You'll be welcome. Come 'long."

By the silent stretch of water, around a jut of mountain wall,

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and in a few moments we were in front of a log cabin which the high screen of rock had hidden until now.

In front of the cabin the child stopped, looked up at me, and laying her hand fearlessly on the face of the nosing Bill, said: "Light off, stranger, an' go in. I'll take keer uv your critter."

"Light down," she said more emphatically, as I hesitated about consigning her to Bill. "Light down an' go into the cabin. I kin take keer uv your critter. I like critters. You won't tread on me notime, will you, horsey?" She gave the astonished Bill a kiss on the nose which put him past even raising his head as she laid hold of the bridle rein.

I "lighted down" as she bid me — unslung my saddle pockets, loosened the saddle girth, and, for a moment watched Bill follow her as if he were under a charm; then I went into the cabin and sat down on a chair withed into swaying discomfort and full of uncertainty.

About me was a cribbed notice to all that a bit of space had been pre-empted as an abode. It was a log cabin with one room only. There had been an effort, once upon a time, to hew the logs flat upon the inside — the axe marks were there to testify to it. There had also been an attempt to fill up the spaces between the logs with mud, but the filling had long ago yielded to frost and rain. Now the logs were as separate as when first notched at the corners and piled across each other. The fireplace contained a pile of ashes parted in the middle and curving up into the corners as if to bolster the blackened, cracked, ricketty stones of which it was built. In the centre of the pile some white-coated embers glowed under a three-legged iron baker.

Above the fireplace was a shelf, black with the smoke of many a year, upon which was heaped all the treasure and decoration of the cabin — a clock out of tick, preserves, jam, a trout line, a salmon spear with a prong wanting, a long rifle and a pair of boots with highly gilded tops, but no heels or toes connected with the legs worth mentioning. Tacked here and there by sweet locust thorns, were gaudy labels from fruit cans, squirrel tails, hawk wings, and plumes of spruce boughs. A row of mussel shells upon the floor was placed as a hypotenuse to the right angle of the cabin's corner, and within it was an indescribable collec-

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tion of broken plates, shells, stones, pebbles, odd knots, chicken feathers, a rag doll and other idiosyncrasies of a child's playhouse. In another corner was a bedstead. On the stone hearth a fat kitten sat contemplating the death of the coals.

Alongside of the door lay a small pile of potatoes; from the rafters hung the remnant of a side of bacon.

While I was taking an inventory of the cabin's contents, and wondering how my little hostess of the ford was going to exercise her hospitality, she came in the doorway, undisturbed, as if the entertainment of travellers was an every-day occurrence. She reported in a business way: "Stranger, I've putted your critter to a stack uv roughness, an' he's eating; now we'll hev some dinner. Mom's not to hum; he's gone up on the rocks whar he sets. He'll come in nigh sundown an' fetch the cows. Hit's no differ; we'll hev some grub. Hit's noon."

She blew up the fire into ruddy sprightliness, went out of the cabin, and I heard her chopping at something. In a little bit she came back with an armful of wood. Soon she had a blazing fire, and turning to the amazed me, said: "Stranger, would you mind holding me up, like Mom does, to git the bacon? Mom won't be home till sundown, he won't."

I picked her up, wanting to kiss her all the while, and put her under the piece of bacon, which she took down from its wooden hook and quickly had slices of it frying in the iron baker.

"Stranger," she said gravely when the bacon was fried, "dinner is done done. Hit ain't much, but you're welcome to it. We hain't no chiney er knives an' forks like we oughter hev, so jine to an' help yourself."

That meant going into the skillet with my fingers. I was so much interested in my entertainer that I knelt by the fireplace, fished off a piece of bacon and thoroughly enjoyed the eating of it. I insisted on her joining me, but she declined. "No, I allus waits fer Mom."

"Tell me your name, please. You have not told me yet?" I asked.

"Pap Ellswick's Minnie, that's all," she answered. "I wish Mom was yere to see you. He's up on the rocks."

The opposite genders of "Mom" and "He" were irreconcil-

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able, but the little witch was earnest and fascinating. The enigma was worth solving.

She told me of the cows and how the horse had mashed the drake which belonged to the lone duck squawking under the cabin, and everything else she could think of concerning the farm — as she called the patch of wilderness about us. She was sitting alongside of me on a chair as unreliable as my own. I so wanted to show my appreciation of her hospitality that I put my arm around her and was going to lift her to my knee when she quickly jumped away. "No, sir," she said indignantly. "I hain't keepin' company with no one; so jist keep your han's off me."

I confess to relief from my embarrassment when she exclaimed: "Here comes Mom! He's comin'."

Either a woman in trousers or a man in skirts was a reasonable expectation; instead, a white-haired, white-bearded, tall, gaunt, ragged man entered the cabin. It cannot be said that he was clad. His clothing epitomized the truth of the proverb: "Patch beside patch is neighborly, but patch upon patch is beggarly."

He gave the usual mountaineer's greeting: "Howdy, stranger. You're welcome. What might your name be? I reckon Minnie's taken keer uv you. She commonly does uv any one that comes our way."

Taking a seat on a box by the fireplace, he said: "Minnie, go milk. I fotched the cows. There's a storm comin'. I seed it from the rocks. I fotched 'em home arly."

The child cheerfully rose and went out. I mentally pictured the mite milking cows many times the size of herself, they all the while submitting their udders to her tiny hands.

Rousing from my revery I said, "Minnie is very small to do that sort of work. I think I will go help her."

"Don't you do it, stranger," the old man replied. "She's the coaxinest girl in the hull kentry. The cows give down their milk to her when they won't to no one else — mought be 'cause she's so leetel. She's a power uv sarvice! I finded her. Did she tell you 'bout it, stranger? How I finded her?"

"No," I answered, with an interrogating inflection. I wanted her history and knew the old man would tell me upon the slightest invitation.

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"Hit wuz the fust luck I'd had for many a day — findin' her. Hit wuz seven year ago the dark uv the moon uv last April. The cows had wandered to the top uv the mountain to Bill Jeemes' clearin' to get the grass whar the sun starts it arly. Hit don't git into the hollers till late. The snow lays thar till way in May, when the spring is back'ard. I wuz bringin' 'em down the trail t'other side uv the ford. Hit wuz jist afore sunrise. The fog hangin' on Blue Creek wuz so heavy I couldn't see nothin' notime. I followed the tinklin' bell uv the leader. Jist tother side uv the ford I heerd somethin' I hadn't heerd for many a year. 'Hit beant a lamb,' I sez. 'Hit beant a painter's cub. Hit's a baby!' I sez. I kinder choked, and things in me sorter stood still. 'Hit's a baby!' I sez. 'Throwed away,' for I heerd no woman comfortin' it, nothin' but the drappin' uv the water from the limbs. I mind hopin' thar wuz no mother for it, for I wuz hungerin' for children. Mine was all gone; gone — married an' left me. An' my wife had been dead this twenty year. I wuz hungerin' for a baby. Hit squalled agin. 'Sartin, that's a baby,' I sez. 'A mile from any cabin — afore sun up — somethin's wrong.' I disremembered the cows an' I took inter the bushes — followin' the sound. Thar I found it — red in the face an' yellin' — in a bundle uv straw, wrapped up in an old calico dress tied round with a plough line. Some gal had throwed it away. I took it in my arms an' stuck it under my coat — kinder warmin' it, kinder hidin' it, for it wuz mine. I'd finded it. I didn't want no one to see it. I wuz tickled ez a cat with kittens. I carried it home an' fed it milk with a bit uv rag on a sasser. That wuz Minnie. I nussed her an' keered fer her. She's allers called me Mom. She's never knowed no other Mom. I kep' her hid for a smart while, fearin' folks 'ud be tryin' to find out whose she wuz. I never tried. She's been a power uv comfort to me — a power! An' sarvice? She's wuth more than a hull houseful for housekeepin'. People roun' yere calls her ole Pap Ellswick's Minnie. I see she spread dinner for you, stranger. She's right handy at cookin'. A storm's comin'. Hit's comin' from the upper waters uv Blue Creek. Thar'll be a tide an' it bilen, in half an hour. I reckon Minnie's to the spring with the milk. Hit's time she wuz in."

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He walked to the door and called her. The wind tripped on the mountain top and fell with a crash into the narrow valley. The air was full of flying leaves. The dark shadow of the storm came almost instantly, lightning streaked from the clouds, thunder shook the earth and the rain dashed in slanting streams. The rocky steeps spouted the water into Blue Creek. It rose rapidly, and rising, bent ferns, alders, low swaying branches, before it.

"Ho, Minnie!" the old man called. "I do b'lieve she's gone to tie up the raft at the upper crossin'," he said anxiously. "She never forgits nothin'. She's afeared it'll git away."

"Heavens, Man, she will be blown away or drowned. I will go after her!" I exclaimed anxiously.

"Don't mind her, stranger. She's been out in wuss storms ner this. She's a regular duck in the water. The tide couldn't drown her no more than a musrat."

Hatless I plunged into the drive, and, shoulder to the wind, forced myself in the direction the old man had pointed. The well-beaten trail guided me to the crossing. The creek boiled angrily. On the opposite side Minnie, with a slender push-pole, held the raft to the shore. A young, gaudily dressed woman clung to a sapling; hair, ribbon, skirts streaming to the wind, and timidly made her way on to the unstable float of drift logs withed together.

"Come on," the child urged, her voice thin and shrill above the bass of the tumult. "Don't be afeared. I'll git you over. Sit down an' you won't fall off. The ole raft wabbles an' tilts. Sit down, I tell you. I'll do the polin'."

The woman loosened her hold on the sapling and crouched upon the raft. Minnie lifted the push-pole from its bracing position.

"Don't try to cross," I shouted. "Stop." The child looked at me and laughed. The raft swung. The torrent caught it. She dexterously turned the jagged prow to the current and set the craft at an angle to it, that the stream's force might drive it across. The crouching woman stared at her. In the earnestness of her gaze she seemed unmindful of the wildness and danger. Suddenly she rose to her knees and clasped Minnie to her bosom. The child clung to her pole. The raft, unmanaged, drifted with the dashing water.

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I tore after it along the bank, through briars and brush, shouting like a demon, as might the Wild Huntsman with phantom prey in sight. I saw the raft with its helpless burden swing and toss around the mountain jut. As it disappeared the two faces were side by side. In the distance they were alike. The truth flashed upon me — a Magdalene and her child.

On I sped, the sweep of the storm aiding me. The race was unequal. Below the jut the stream was visible until it circled in its channel beyond Three-Mile; its tossing surface was bare. The raft had disappeared. The ford was in sight. There the weaker current of Three-Mile was backed into a swirling pool by the larger stream, now a fathom deep over the stepping stones. As I ran and watched for a sign of life, I saw something swimming in the swirl. Before I could get to her I saw that it was Minnie. She swam to the bank and clambered from the water. She did not pause, she did not look back. Her step was determined, her face was hard, her eyes glittered, her dress, half torn from her, dragged in the mud. The rain pelted, the wind halted her. I reached to take her in my arms. She drew herself up with a dignity that stopped me. "Let me be, stranger. I'm going to my Mom. That woman said she wuz my mother. She cried an' tried to make much uv me. I axed her if she wuz the woman that chucked me in the bushes, an' she 'llowed she wuz. I jerked myself from her an' tore my dress. I throwed her the push-pole an' I sez: 'You kin hev it, an' the raft, but you can't have me. You throwed me away an' left me.' I jumped into the creek an' swum for the swirl. I'm goin' to my Mom. He's my Mom. He's keered for me."

She left me. Later, I saw her asleep in the old man's arms. He was tenderly curling her wet hair upon his knotty forefinger.

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The Lost Button.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

SOMEBODY has defined crime as "the momentary victory of an hereditary craving over common sense." In the case of the two Gilfillans, the same craving manifested itself in each man at the same moment. This was peculiar. The desire came upon each of the brothers to possess two blood horses belonging to a neighbor, and common sense was routed in the struggle to suppress the craving.

The Gilfillans got the horses, and, incidentally, the sheriff got the Gilfillans. A stern judge conducted the judicial inquiry, and, unable to see that the brothers were victims of a craving, handed down from a horse-loving ancestor, he sent them to Enlota penitentiary for seven years.

This was unfortunate. The younger Gilfillan was consumptive, and Enlota's "Little Hell" was not an ideal health resort. Three months after sentence the boy was sent to the jail hospital, and became firmly imbued with the feeling that he would not recover his health. The sentence had smashed up the last ounce of vitality that was holding the fort against the disease, and the prisoner was sinking rapidly.

Now, prisoners in jail hospital receive no tobacco. Whether the prison medico believes that the brand supplied to the numbered inmates is a compound that can only be safely consumed by the physically strong is not known, but the weekly supply allowed to a prisoner on the "works" is immediately cut off if he is taken to the hospital. The dearth of tobacco affected the consumptive Gilfillan. He craved a "chew," and in distress he acquainted the brother of his craving by what is in jail parlance known as a "stiff." With a pin the sick man scratched his wants on the loose leaf of a hymn book, and in due time the pitiful

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note, after passing through the hands of a dozen prisoners, reached the healthy brother, who was learning to manufacture boots in the prison workshop.

The elder Gilfillan had deep pools of sentiment beneath a rough exterior. Furthermore, he took no heed of consequences. He pictured the sick brother, waiting tobaccoless in the dreary hospital, and he took a chance to supply him. The chance was a risky one. While passing the barred hospital yard he dexterously jerked a small cube of tobacco to the white-faced brother, who happened to be walking up and down inside, and he breathed a tremendous sigh of relief when he became certain that the warder in charge of the squad had not noticed the action. The elder Gilfillan was not afraid of any punishment that might fall upon himself; he was afraid lest the morsel of tobacco would be taken away from the sick youth who craved the delicacy.

But Nemesis was galloping on the heels of the two Gilfillans. Warder Bulstrode, looking down from his perch on the south tower, saw the movement, and Bulstrode was a conscientious officer. Five minutes after, the younger brother was stripped of the miserable gift, and the giver was dragged before the chief warder and sentenced to seven days' dark cell for a breach of prison discipline. In jail, charity is a virtue that is promptly smothered when the powers that be become aware of its existence.

It was the elder Gilfillan's first introduction to the dark cell. When he was pushed into the windowless chamber, the horrible, intense, suffocating darkness closed in upon him like a smothering pall. Blind and stupefied, he groped his way around the bare walls, the horror piercing him through and through like an icy sword. Afterwards he flung himself on the stone floor and lay like a man stunned by a terrific blow.

Some hours later he thought of the button. A medical student, who had once undergone a term of imprisonment at Enlota, had promulgated a theory by which the mental agony produced by dark cell treatment could be considerably relieved. He advised all prisoner friends who might visit "The Doghole" to toss a button into the air, and while away the time by searching for it on hands and knees in the darkness. The student understood the value of little things, and he recognized the fact that a continuous

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hunt for a missing button would drag the mind away from the black abyss of insanity.

Gilfillan, groping blindly in the darkness, remembered the advice. He ripped a button from his striped jacket and tossed it into the thick air. Listening intently he heard it fall in a far away corner of the cell, and on hands and knees he started to search for it.

The sport fascinated him. When he discovered the metal disc he spun it up and again started in pursuit. The leaden hours rolled by slowly, but the game continued. Gilfillan blessed the button. He began to feel a love for it. He called to it when it hid from him in the cracks between the cold stones, and he cried hysterically over it when he discovered it after a long search. It seemed alive. It became a companion to him in that horrible, black vault into which not one single ray of light came to pierce the darkness.

It was on the evening of the sixth day that Nemesis clinched with Gilfillan. The prisoner had, up to that moment, thrown the button up a thousand times and found it on each occasion by laboriously searching on hands and knees. But on the evening of the sixth day a peculiar incident happened.

The prisoner threw the button up into the blackness, but it did not come down again.

Gilfillan waited with aching ears to hear the tinkle of the metal on the stone, but he heard no sound. The button didn't fall, and the silence that filled the cell as he stood listening, hurt him. He clenched his teeth to strangle a scream of terror that fear pushed to his lips. What was wrong?

The prisoner's trembling knees gave way under him and he sank to the floor. His hands moved out into the darkness and commenced to feel the stone flooring, but every nerve was taut.

On every other occasion when he had tossed up the button he had heard it fall distinctly, but he was certain that there was not the slightest sound after the last toss. Still, he would search.

The hot hands crept over the stones eagerly, feverishly. The fingers worked madly, but the bare floor mocked their search. There was no button. Again and again and again the prisoner searched. Through the cold hours of the night he crawled back-

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wards and forwards till each joining between those tombstones of Hope seemed familiar to his blind fingers. But there was nothing on the floor. The button had not fallen after he had jerked it into the blackness!

Gilfillan tried to think. Why had it not returned? he asked himself. What had happened to it? There was nothing above him but bare walls, and yet —! Where was it? Again and again he whispered the question of the thick black pall that seemed to heave around him. He asked it in a louder tone. He screamed it. Then something like a laugh came from one corner of that brain-destroying pit of horror, and Gilfillan was panic stricken.

Imagination, contrary to the opinion of scientific experts, lies in the stomach, and the bread and water diet that Gilfillan had been receiving was not sufficiently weighty to keep it down. The prisoner began to see things. The thick waves of curse-encrusted darkness welled up from the corners and smothered him. Invisible hands grasped his throat and strangled him. He kicked at the door leading into the dark corridor opening into the main wing, but Warder Tomlinson, of the night watch, was slightly deaf, and did not hear him. He raced around the cell with Terror — grasping, gibbering Terror — at his heels, and the stone vault echoed to his wild screams of agony.

When Warder Dunworth opened the door on the morning of the seventh day to acquaint Gilfillan of the fact that his term in dark cell was over, the hands of Terror had completed their work. The prisoner's face was battered beyond recognition where he had dashed against the walls in his mad race, and he shrieked wildly when the warder attempted to drag him into the light.

Eleven years afterwards, when an enlightened prison controller did away with the dark cells, the masons, tearing down the black vault at Enlota, found a jacket button securely fastened in a thick cobweb near the ceiling of the cell. But in the criminal ward of Enlota Insane Asylum a prisoner still spends his days and nights hunting for that button.

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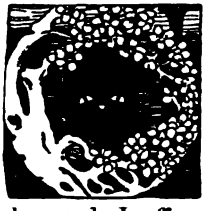
The Ghost Ship.*

BY C. A. BORDEN.



IT was early in the spring of 1907 that a most remarkable experience occurred to me, so remarkable indeed, that I lost no time in narrating it.

Wise men have looked askance at me while I recounted it, and fools have laughed, yet, not daunted, I offer this tale to the world, to ridicule or believe as it will.

Ever since a boy I have been fond of the sea. Its vastness, its strength and even its loneliness have always attracted and fascinated me.

Many were the days I spent on its great, heaving bosom, even before I reached my teens—fishing, sailing or rowing. When quite young I learned to sail, and by the time that I was eighteen I was an expert. I shipped before the mast on a lumber schooner for two years, studied navigation and at twenty-five was first mate on the schooner *Frances Howard* of San Francisco. I have since acted in the capacity of first officer on the passenger steamers plying between San Francisco and Japan, and it was on my return from one of these trips that my story begins.

For two years I had been running back and forth between here and the Orient without missing a voyage, and it was on the home bound run in February of this year that I decided, as I paced the bridge on my night watch, to take a vacation, something that I had not done for twelve years, since I had left my father's roof. So, as soon as we made port and I could leave, I went to the offices of the company and made arrangements to have them put another in my place for the next six months.

I then took a car out to my father's house on Devisidero Street. The old people were delighted to learn that I was to be with

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them for a time, and immediately commenced making plans for my entertainment.

I had been in town for about a week when one day, while down on the water front, I met my old friend, Shirley Keith.

I had known Shirley for years and liked him. He was a genial sort of fellow, with blue eyes and a jovial laugh; a laugh which he always used when greeting a friend, and which made one feel immediately at home with him.

"Well, Jack Kent," he said, as he put forth his hand, "what are you doing ashore? I haven't seen you for a month of Sundays."

"Just loafing," I replied. "I am taking a little vacation after twelve years of the strenuous life."

"Well, you no doubt need it, though you certainly don't appear to. But come on and go to lunch with me somewhere — I'm in a hurry."

I accepted, so he took me to Tait's, where we selected a table near the orchestra.

When we were seated and had given our orders, Keith said:

"You know that I have purchased the schooner yacht, *Morpheus.*"

"What, not the 'Ghost Ship'?"

"The same," he said with a laugh, "though I have not been annoyed by any nocturnal visitors since my ownership."

"Of course this ghost business is all bosh," I said. "A ghost is the hallucination of a diseased mind. Still there are some very wise men who believe in the existence of the supernatural, though I for one am not bothered by any such fool superstition, not that I consider myself wise in any sense of the word."

"Well according to her previous owners, very unusual things have occurred aboard the *Morpheus,* but I'm not worried, and in fact only wish that something of the kind would occur to me for a little excitement," he said.

"I may have a chance to see something of the kind, as I am going to take her to Los Angeles the end of the week and spend the summer in southern waters."

"That sounds very nice," I said.

"You had better come with me."

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"I should like to, but I have determined to take a vacation ashore, and, besides, I have no stomach for ghosts."

"Rats!" he said, "I can fancy your being afraid of ghosts, and as far as the vacation is concerned, we will be ashore half of the time."

I wanted to go from the very start, and only needed a little persuasion to decide me, so we had not yet finished our noonday repast when I consented.

"Good," said Keith, reaching for my hand, "I knew that you would come around all right, and now we will go down to the boat."

He told me on the way that he had a crew of five men, beside a cook and mate, the latter's name being Hanson.

Keith summoned the launch by whistling through his fingers, and soon a beautifully finished boat, propelled by a two-horse gasoline engine, lay snorting alongside the wharf.

As we approached the yacht I noticed her fine lines and tapering spars, with the sunlight shimmering on her mahogany rails and brass work.

We climbed the companionway and stood upon her white deck. There was a general bustle and stir among her crew, scraping and splicing were going on, and the odor of fresh paint filled the air. I stood in the cockpit, looking forward, and could find no fault nor flaw in her construction.

She measured one hundred and twelve feet over all, with a ninety-five-foot water line. Her twenty-foot beam and high freeboard marked her the weather boat, while her towering masts and graceful lines showed the racer.

Keith watched me as I looked her over and noted the pleased expression on my face.

"So you like her looks, do you, old man?" he asked.

"I should say I do, she is superb."

"Come below," he said, leading the way down the after-companionway.

Below, she was even more attractive than on deck. The main saloon was a beauty, finished in rosewood and magnificently appointed. Forward of the saloon were eight staterooms, bath and galley, and opening off of the galley was the forecastle.

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I was immensely pleased with her appearance and said so.

Keith called up the scuttle to the mate, who instantly came below.

The mate was plainly a Norwegian, both by accent and appearance. He was a large man, with strong, kindly face and a decided blond.

"Mr. Hanson, let me introduce you to Mr. Kent, who is going to be with us this summer."

The mate extended his hand and expressed himself very gravely as being glad to know me.

"How are the men getting along?" asked Keith.

"Very well, sir," answered the mate, respectfully. "We will be ready to leave at any time after tonight."

"Good! but I will not want to leave before Saturday at noon. I have some business that I must attend to."

We spent the rest of the afternoon on a tour of inspection and about six o'clock were taken ashore.

It was Thursday when Keith took me aboard and I put in the following day in moving my effects out and laying in a supply of white ducks, etc., which I thought might come in handy in Southern latitudes.

We were to sail Saturday at noon, but Saturday morning Keith came aboard and said that his business would detain him for several days and asked me if I would mind taking the *Morpheus* down to San Pedro for him.

"But what is your reason for not keeping the yacht over until you are ready to go yourself?"

"I want her to be down there next week, as I have made some engagements that I must keep, so if you will sail her down, I will take the train when I have completed my transactions, and arrive as soon as you will."

I gladly consented, and he went ashore, promising to be down Thursday or Friday of the following week.

At twelve o'clock we slipped our moorings and with all lower sails set, tore out of the Golden Gate, propelled by a brisk northeasterly breeze.

It was a cold, dreary sort of day, and the heavy chop outside was being lashed into foam by the wind.

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The *Morpheus* leapt over the waves, churning the water into milky whiteness under her bows, and leaving a seething ribbon of white in her wake.

Hanson and myself, who had become good friends by this time, stood chatting behind the man at the wheel until we were clear of the headlands, when I went below for a nap.

I was awakened at four bells for dinner.

After a hearty meal, I lit my pipe and went on deck to find that the wind had risen during the afternoon and that we were bowling along at a good fifteen knots.

Hanson went to get his dinner and I stood watch.

Before he came on deck again, the wind, which had been blowing so steadily, suddenly dropped to a fitful breeze, and at last ceased altogether, leaving the sails flapping idly and the water slopping under our after overhang.

We lay in the trough of the swell, rolling heavily for several hours, and we were still in this position when I turned in.

Everything loose was banging and rattling, the fore boom tore back and forth on the traveller directly over my cabin, the doors slammed and squeaked and the sea swashed alongside with a hollow sough.

But these things didn't bother me, and I quickly fell asleep.

I was soon awake, however, and standing up looking out of my port. The wind had come up again, but from the opposite direction and we were careening wildly to starboard and rushing through the water. I was soon on deck and saw that quite a wind was blowing and was growing steadily worse.

Hanson had called all hands and was giving orders, while the men were running here and there, tightening things down and getting in sail. The foresail and jib were quickly furled, and we rode more steadily under mainsail and staysail. I then went below to finish my sleep and didn't come on deck again until eight bells had struck and Hanson came down.

The wind was still blowing heavily and we were running South-South-West, but not making much time on account of the headseas which were continually piling up before us.

Toward morning the wind was blowing almost a hurricane and all the next day we stood hove to.

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Sunday evening it abated somewhat and we again continued our course, out of which we had been blown many miles.

Monday morning the cook told me at breakfast that strange noises during the previous night had alarmed the crew, and that they had heard that the schooner was haunted. I laughed at this and told the mate, who shook his head and smiled.

That day one of the crew came to me himself and said that he had heard peculiar sounds issuing from below the ship. He couldn't explain the sounds except that they were most terrifying.

I asked him what he had been drinking and sent him forward.

That night during my watch below I was aroused by the cook, who came to tell me that the man on watch forward had strangely disappeared, and no trace of him could be found.

The man's name was Christensen.

I went on deck, where Hanson corroborated the statement.

We came to the conclusion that he had fallen overboard, though no one had seen him go, and there were two other men on deck at the time.

Tuesday night another member of the crew went in the same mysterious manner, but this time the mate was watching him. He saw him start violently, give a little cry and grope toward the rail like a blind man. He called to him, but the man gave no heed. He called again, but still the fellow paid no attention, and steadily approached the rail.

Hanson rushed forward, and the man, whose name was Bergstrom, looked over his shoulder at the sound of the mate's feet,—a fearful expression came over his face,—and, with a scream of terror which caused the mate to pause, leaped into the sea.

Hanson hurried to the rail, but the wind was blowing strongly and it was a pitch black night, so he saw no sign of the unfortunate seaman, and by the time that he had run aft, pushed the wheelsman aside and put the schooner into the wind, Bergstrom was several hundred yards astern.

He lowered a boat and sent men out with lanterns, but they came back without Bergstrom, after spending an hour or more rowing back and forth.

When I came on deck a little while later, to relieve the mate, two of the three remaining members of our crew and the cook

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stood against the foremast, while the third was at the wheel. I noticed the latter's face, thrown out in strong relief against the black sky by the binnacle light. It wore a strained, frightened expression, and every now and then he glanced over his shoulder at the dark, heaving sea, and seeing me behind him, started, and again fixed his eyes on the compass.

I ordered the men against the foremast to turn in, and stood the forward watch myself, but nothing unusual happened during the rest of the night and Hanson looked relieved when I reported all well at dawn.

I am not easily frightened, yet I must admit that the singular disappearance of two of our crew, in such an unaccountable manner, strangely moved me.

That night I determined to stand watch with the mate, to be on hand if anything out of the ordinary might occur.

Immediately after dinner I lit my pipe and went on deck, where I took up my position behind the forward skylight, a good vantage point from which to watch the man on the forecastle deck.

Everything ran smoothly for several hours, the watches were called and changed, and the wind, which had been blowing steadily all day, still blew us along at a rapid pace. I became sleepy after two hours of watching, with nothing to break the monotony, and at last dozed off.

I had been asleep for perhaps five minutes when I was awakened by a roar from the mate and the sound of running feet behind me. I instantly sprang to my feet and saw the forward lookout groping toward the rail. In two bounds I was upon him.

With a despairing cry the man tried to twist himself from my grasp, and fought with the strength of a tiger to get away, and he would have, had Hanson not seized him from behind and held him in an iron grip.

"What is the matter, man?" I asked, when he had quieted.

"O God! didn't you see it, didn't you see it?" he cried.

"No, see what?"

"I don't know what it was. Something horrible, that made me want to jump overboard to forget it! Looked like a lot of drowned people, all fish-eaten and bloated, beckoning me from the water. God, how it frightened me." His voice fell almost to

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a whisper, and he shuddered and cast an apprehensive glance over his shoulder at the remembrance.

We took him below, where I poured him out a glass of spirits to steady his nerves, and where the bright cabin light seemed to comfort him.

The remainder of the night passed peacefully and at six in the morning I turned in.

I was very tired after my all night vigil and soon dropped into a dreamless slumber, from which I did not awaken until three in the afternoon.

When I rolled over and looked at my watch I was surprised at the lateness of the hour and quickly dressed, wondering why I had not been called.

Everything seemed unusually quiet and a strange foreboding of evil stole over me as I mounted the companion-way stairs. This quickly turned into a sort of terror when I saw that no one was at the wheel and the deck was absolutely deserted.

I called loudly several times, but the creak of the boom against the mast and the shrill scream of a sea gull, wheeling in flight overhead, were the only answers I received.

I rushed to the forecastle scuttle and peered below. No one was there. I rummaged through every part of the vessel, but not a soul was aboard! What had become of my companions?

With a lonesome feeling I ran on deck, glad to escape the increasing gloom of the cabin.

For the first time I noticed that one of the boats was gone. I scanned the sea far and near with my glasses, but no boat met my gaze—the straight azure line of the horizon stood out boldly against the lighter blue of the sky, unbroken.

With a curse I turned my attention to the compass and saw that the schooner was miles off her course, and I had no idea how long she had been running thus.

There had been no entry in the log for the day, so I worked out my position and found that I was still one hundred and twenty-five miles from my destination, due to the fact that I had been running, evidently most of the day, at right angles to my original course.

Having set the bow once more in the right direction I went

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below again to light up and get something to eat, intending to spend the night at the wheel.

When I returned, however, the wind had dropped to almost nothing and at last ceased altogether.

I sat in the cock-pit for awhile, smoking, but at last went to my stateroom to read until the wind should freshen.

I read for several hours and had just laid my book down to look at the barometer when a peculiar sound on deck attracted my attention. I imagined that a man was walking up and down overhead. I listened intently. Yes, there it was again, nearer now and more distinct. I held my breath for a minute. The sound continued—tramp, tramp, up and down, up and down. The man, if man it was, evidently had water in his boots, for at every step I could hear the sough and ooze of water, and at every turn in his beat I heard it pattering on the deck.

In a frenzy of foolish fear and nervous apprehension, I rushed up to see what it was.

But all my fright was for nothing, for no one was there.

A smiling moon lit up a peaceful sea, the shadows rode slowly back and forth across the deck, and the boats swung noiselessly in their davits.

I surveyed the tranquil scene for several minutes and then, with a laugh at my own cowardice, went below to my book.

I had no sooner taken it up, though, than the noise which had previously startled me was resumed—Tramp, tramp, tramp. I started up and listened. The steps ceased for a minute, and I heard a deep groan, followed by a sigh as though from one in agony. Then the steps continued.

My heart was pounding wildly and the cold perspiration stood in heavy beads upon my forehead.

With a superhuman effort, I again went on deck. There was nothing there to cause alarm—everything was the same as before.

Waiting for a few minutes, I went back to my book.

As I neared my door the light in my room was suddenly extinguished and I was left in utter darkness except for the rays of the moon which filtered through the skylight and port-holes and fell in odd-shaped patches on the wall.

At first a dread of the supernatural stole over me and I was

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for turning back, but upon reflection decided that a draught had blown my lamp out.

I lit it again and it burned as brightly as ever.

So nervous was I by this time that I locked and bolted my door.

I then attempted to finish the story I was reading, but my mind kept continually reverting to that terrible sound, and I was constantly on the alert for it to begin again.

Suddenly the ring knob of my door dropped with a sharp click, almost causing my heart to stop.

I looked at it intently for a second. Good God! it was turning! So was the bolt knob.

Petrified with fear and astonishment, I lay there for a moment, watching it as it slowly and deliberately turned. Then I sprang for the door. With all my strength, and I am no weakling, I strove to twist it back, I even bent the ring in my hand, but with irresistible force it began to open inward, very slowly. I flung my weight on it and braced myself against the bunk behind me, but to no avail. Slowly it forced me back, and at the same time the lamp was extinguished again.

With a hoarse sob of fear I loosened my grip on the door and let it swing unhampered, slowly inward, while I hurriedly struck a match to light the lamp again. The little point of flame flared up for a second, but immediately went out.

At the same time an icy hand seemed to touch me from behind, and I heard a low, deep moan issuing from the darkness.

In a frenzy of fear I endeavored to run from the gruesome cabin out into the starry night. But some inexplainable, undefinable thing held me at the door, and, strive as I would, I could not pass. I groped back to the bunk.

My foot suddenly came in contact with something on the floor and I tripped and fell flat across it. It seemed to be a big bunch of seaweed and was all wet and slimy.

I hurriedly jumped to my feet, drew away from it, and lit another match. This time it burned long enough for me to see what I had fallen over.

It was seaweed, but was all tangled and gnarled around what appeared to be the fish-eaten and bloated corpse of a man. At the same time the gruesome thing reared itself into a standing po-

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sition and moved toward me. The match went out, but by the light of the moon I beheld its terrible and fearsome features as it advanced, peering out of the tangle of yellow kelp at me with its empty sockets.

I shuddered with horror and drew my sheath knife, striking out wildly, but the awful apparition did not stop, though I struck home repeatedlly.

My brain reeled, and I fell senseless to the cabin floor.

When I recovered consciousness the sun was streaming in upon me through the skylight.

How I welcomed its warm, generous, yellow light to drive away the awful darkness.

And how glad I was when I went on deck, after my cold breakfast of ham and bread, to hear the water gurgling alongside and find a gentle morning breeze wafting me steadily southward.

At three, that afternoon, I put in behind the breakwater at San Pedro and managed to let go an anchor and get down my headsails alone.

Keith, who had grown anxious about me and had been keeping watch from the veranda of the South Coast Yacht Club, on the bluff, was alongside in a launch almost as soon as the chain had rattled through the hawse pipe.

It certainly felt good to feel his strong hand-clasp and hear his friendly voice.

He told me that the men, terrified at the prospect of spending another night aboard, had overpowered the mate, put him into one of the boats, and slipped away, while I was asleep, and that they had been picked up by a lumber schooner and brought into San Pedro. And thus ended my most terrible experience.

We have since discovered that the mainmast of the *Morpheus* was one which had been in the Norwegian barque *Victory,* when she foundered off the Golden Gate in 1899, carrying all hands to the bottom. Perhaps this is an explanation.

Keith has had a new mast put in, anyway.

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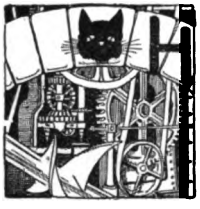
The Fire Dutchman.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



HE was known as the Fire Dutchman, a nickname that he had justly earned by attending every fire of any consequence that had occurred in the city for a period of ten years. He was a fat little man, who had taken to heart literally the Biblical injunction, Let thy answer be always yea and nay, and no more, only he pronounced it, yah and nine.

But though he was not given to much speech, the little man had a laugh that continually welled up from his heart to his broad felt hat. It was mellow and bubbling, rich and warm, and sweet as a boiling pot of maple syrup. It seemed always sun-up in the little Dutchman's heart, and never sun-down.

Years before, when he first began regularly to attend every fire of any consequence, the firemen and police had sought to move him along as a nuisance, for he would get as close to the flames as flesh and blood dare get, while he invariably brought with him a big brass horn mounted on bicycle wheels, and during the progress of the fire he would blow the horn softly and musically.

But after a time the men grew to liking him about — his music was soothing and cheering by turn, and the superstition got to be accredited that this melody somehow checked the flames, and luck was always with the firemen while the little Fire Dutchman continued to blow on his great horn.

"Yah," he would say; "moosic iss goot to but out der vire mit! Yah? nine?" And then his laugh could be heard bubbling in the notes of the big brass horn.

There were certain minds that speculated about this assertion of the little Dutchman. Perhaps fire could be checked with music. Fire is but one form of energy or activity, and music has power to soothe and quiet. Could the Fire Dutchman be an in-

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ventive genius who was slowly perfecting a new fire extinguisher?

A certain horn was said to have blown down a certain wall in Biblical times — might not the Dutchman's horn blow down a wall of fire?

"Humph!" exclaimed the skeptical. "He is only a crazy Dutchman whose musical bump is excited by heat and flame."

"Perhaps so, and we will dismiss the fire-extinguishing theory," conceded the speculative. "But yet you must have noticed that there are strange notes in his playing. May it not be possible that his horn and not his brain has chords that are excited by fire? For instance, there is the æolian harp, that the wind makes music on: May not his horn be a thing that fire and heat can make music on? He may not blow into the horn at all, but merely seem to, and what we hear may be music made by the heat energy of the fire affecting some delicate instrument concealed in the horn. Heat melody, as it were, or fire translated into song."

"Humph!" again exclaimed the skeptical. "He's got a little sausage factory up at his house, and he may have brains enough to translate man's best friend into sausages, but never fire into song. Take my advice, friend, and buy your gasoline at some other garage."

But whatever the world thought about him, nothing seemed to affect the little Fire Dutchman save fire itself. That baked him brown and browner, till he grew to resemble one of his own smoked sausages. The wonder was he kept so fat, with the moisture toasted out of his body every few days at some fire, but the spring of laughter undefiled in his heart may have had something to do with the matter.

The pitcher that goes too oft to the well is at last broken, and the little Fire Dutchman who ran too often to fires was at last killed. A wall toppled on him and his horn at a great fire one night in a down-town wholesale district, and when they got to him he was quite dead.

They took him up and bore him away in his horn. "The little Fire Dutchman is dead — in a horn!" the burly policemen jested, ashamed to confess their personal grief at the sad accident.

After the funeral, which was attended by every fireman who could get off duty, a gentleman who had taken a deep interest in

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the disposal made of the horn called on the widow of the little Fire Dutchman and offered to purchase the sausage shop.

The sum he offered was so considerable that the widow turned the place over to him the following day, and moved her personal belongings into other quarters.

Immediately the gentleman went on a tour of investigation and found that all the machinery used in the making of sausages on the premises was run by electric power. But yet there was no electric plant on the premises, and no wires leading into the house.

Again the gentleman examined the crushed horn that the little Fire Dutchman for a period of ten years had carried to every fire of any consequence that had occurred in the city. Ah! could he rediscover the principle of the delicate, broken mechanism concealed in the horn?

If so, then with capital to back him, a vast fortune was at his command. For here was the means of translating into electric energy the untold heat-power lost every year beyond recovery in the innumerable fires that ravage towns and cities, and which, until the little Fire Dutchman had hit upon his invention, no man had thought of utilizing.

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A Hired Gallant.*

BY FLORENCE MARTIN EASTLAND.

WOMAN, however unattractive to men, may sometimes reverse the condition, if honest enough to admit the fact and sufficiently clever in devising ingenious methods of accomplishment.

So reasoned Jessie Rogers, a school teacher by choice and a spinster by accident. Nothing short of an accident could consign a loving heart and a domestic disposition to a companionless fireside.

She rose rather suddenly from the couch where she had been thinking intently and, crossing the room, studied her plain face in the mirror.

"I *am* homely," she sighed, "but that should not prevent my enjoying life. Certainly my preponderance of gray matter ought to steer my bark into more exciting channels than endless grade-work, teachers' meetings and institutes. 'Ay, there's the rub': I cannot man my bark. Not that I want the man really — I know how to steer," she added quickly; "but I would like his attention — his services. I want to be able to say, with the important air of the giddiest girl who teaches only for money to buy new clothes, 'I am going out this evening.' I want to exult in the knowledge that such a statement will not mean an engagement with several of my kind — respectable, conventional and dull. In fact — well, why should I evade the truth? — I'm tired of being permanently shelved without a display at all and I want to come down on the counter just to see if some one, no matter who, with a 'Here's something nice,' will not haul me out from behind the fresher, gayer stock."

She paused in the act of smoothing back an unruly strand of hair. Impulsively she picked out the pins and soon a fluffy crown

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replaced the plainer coiffure. From some drawer she unearthed a brilliant comb, a present from a pupil whose lack of taste she had deplored.

"There," she observed as she adjusted it and cocked her head to obtain the effect, "that's isn't a bad beginning. To continue my metaphor, I am now brushed up and ready for a bargain tag. You know," she continued, addressing the face in the glass, "that you, by fun-killing economy, have saved a thousand dollars against that day, some time distant yet, thank heaven! when you will become a back number in your profession and a regular patron of a neurotic specialist." Her wholesome laugh was a negation. "Now, if it takes every cent, you've got to do it. You are going to gratify your inclinations once."

Seizing a pencil she wrote steadily for a little, read what she had written, and tore it up. Again she applied herself, with the same unsatisfactory result. At last she read the written product doubtfully, put on her hat at an unaccustomed angle and sought a down-town business block. Before a door lettered "Robert Bradbury, Attorney at Law," she halted with a conscious air of doing something freakish. A little flush covered her sallow cheek as she passed into the office and greeted the lawyer.

"So glad to see you, Jessie," he exclaimed as he placed a chair. "Going out home with me for dinner? We have been wondering what had become of you."

"Thank you — not to-day." She hesitated a little while the flush deepened. "I — I came to consult you about this."

She took the paper from her chatelaine and with a nervous laugh tossed it on his desk. Astonishment rounded Mr. Bradbury's mouth and lifted his heavy eyelids.

"Why, Jessie! Do you mean this really?"

"Certainly," was the spirited answer. "There is nothing improper in hiring an escort when a woman cannot attract one, and society and custom unite in frowning upon her going about unattended. I am willing to pay ten dollars per week for a young man of good character and refinement to attend me three evenings out of the seven. It is simply a business arrangement. Will you, or will you not, insert that advertisement, act as my agent, and look up references if any persons respond?"

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"Of course I will — gladly, too. The novelty of the idea rather startled me, but in the light of a business affair, I am not opposed to it. Any restrictions about love-making?"

"There won't need to be any. I can manage that — I always have," she finished ruefully.

Several days elapsed before she received a telephone message from Mr. Bradbury requesting her to come to his office. From the flood of applicants who evinced Barkis-like inclinations he had selected two, either of whom met all requirements. He described both as correct in appearance and with excellent references; but, if there were a choice, he would incline toward Lindsay Morris, who was somewhat older and a member of a dancing club.

"Engage him," decided Jessie instantly, "but give me the address of the other in case of need. Be explicit in saying to Mr. Morris that his check will be sent at the end of each week and that I desire him to avoid mentioning to me that there is a business understanding between us. At any time he wishes to terminate the contract he can do so through you. One thing more: He must not take me to such expensive places of entertainment that he cannot save half the weekly check. I will consider church-going, lectures and calling, with an occasional dance or attendance at the theater ample return for my investment. I know this is a departure for me from a time-honored program," she explained half-apologetically, half-defiantly, "but I am tired of sitting alone in poky boarding-houses and occupying an elevated mental plane. I have enlarged so many youthful characters I want to try an experiment on my own before it ossifies. I am going to learn to dance," she further contributed.

The next evening Jessie was called to the parlor by an unusual event. A gentleman had sent up his card. With inward perturbation she read his letter of introduction from Mr. Bradbury and paid a silent yet fervent tribute to the lawyer's ability in selecting an escort.

Lindsay Morris was indeed all that could be desired — courtly, attentive, entertaining. The time passed delightfully, and when Jessie ran to her mirror to confide to her reflection the brilliant success of her plan, she was amazed to find herself transformed. Animation lent color to her complexion and brightened her dull

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eyes. Excitement contributed an alertness of expression quite new to her, while the security of her independence gave a dash of becoming recklessness.

"How well he did it," she chuckled. "Almost did I forget there was a business arrangement when he requested the honor of my company to the dance Wednesday evening. I believe I will take a private dancing lesson to-morrow after school."

Which she did, further decimating her bank account through the addition of some furbelows to her modest wardrobe — a reckless extravagance over which she gasped when she figured the sum total, but experienced no regret.

The club dance was a most enjoyable affair, to Jessie at least, whose dancing improved under Morris's patient tutelage. Although evidently popular, his attentions to Jessie were as punctilious as though no weekly check were forthcoming. He introduced her to almost every man in the room; and with secret satisfaction she saw nothing to indicate that their courtesies to her were suggested. They left her not a dull moment. The scheme was certainly working beautifully.

On Friday evening her escort took her to the theater. He had chosen excellent seats and between the acts Jessie was pleased to recognize a few friends and acquaintances, who bestowed upon her and her companion a second curious glance. She was glad they saw Morris, if they did wonder how he came to be with her, for he was a man to be proud of. After the play he proposed supper at a café.

"But that would cost too much," objected Jessie. "Under the agreement ——"

"I beg your pardon," stiffly interrupted Morris. "Did you mention agreement?"

His commanding air brought forth a stammered apology from Jessie, who meekly accompanied him to the café, where she thought to punish him with a lavish order; but he evinced no surprise, even proposing some expensive additions. On Saturday, however, when the first check was due Morris, she drew it for fifteen dollars instead of ten, and gave it to the postman in the morning. Shortly after luncheon a messenger brought her a five-dollar check signed by Lindsay Morris. No mention of the

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occurrence was made when he took her to church Sunday evening, and Jessie enjoyed this exciting little by-play.

The program was varied the succeeding week by a concert, a call on a friend they discovered they had in common, and a dinner at a new hotel. To Jessie one of the delights of the situation was that no suggestions came from her. There was such a pleasure in wondering what he would next propose, and it always proved more enjoyable than she could have thought of.

Early in the third week, when he came merely to spend the evening, he encountered another caller, who was introduced as Mr. Howerton. Another teacher in the house was called into the parlor and the four played whist. Jessie managed to conceal her pleasure when Morris reminded her, as he rose to go, of the dance Wednesday — and also a little later, when Mr. Howerton, taking his departure, asked permission to accompany her to the play the following night. On both occasions other men dropped in unexpectedly and she had to be excused in order to keep her engagement.

"Men are just like sheep," she laughed as she put away her new evening gown. "I might have sat here forever before one got inside the fence if I hadn't let down the bars; but with one in, the rest are eager to follow."

It was not surprising that she became popular. The terms of her contract lent her assurance. Men sought her society and she grew prettily independent and exacting. The sudden appreciation was wine to her intellect, which shone with unsuspected brilliance. Her admirers forgot her plainness. She was dependent upon Morris no longer; indeed, she went out almost as frequently with Mr. Howerton, a younger man, of fine appearance.

A month passed quickly in this new and rejuvenating atmosphere. Jessie was in such demand by Morris, Mr. Howerton, or some other representative of the once mole-eyed sex, that she found scant time for the course of study she had planned. At school she was obliged to utilize every spare moment during intermissions to keep up with the work. Sometimes she had a guilty feeling that she was not doing her duty when her enjoyments lulled all desire to worry over John Smith's moral development or Mary Jones's frivolity. She regarded a happy smile and some

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of her excess flowers and bonbons now and then as a plain shirking of her obligations; but perhaps John Smith, with a smelly rose on his coat-lapel, and Mary Jones, sampling Huyler's Best, were as greatly benefited after all. She began to experience a comfortable feeling that the characters of the future mothers and fathers were not altogether dependent upon her training. And her callers multiplied.

One evening when Morris came to take Jessie to a lecture he found Mr. Howerton there before him.

"There appears to be a mistake," smiled Jessie, who could not appear surprised at the outcome of her plans, "for which I must be responsible. I find I have promised to go with both of you. I will telephone a friend near by to go with us. You don't mind calling for her, do you, Mr. Morris?"

"Certainly not," he returned, but added as he followed her to the telephone in the hall; "but if I am not violating a rule" — with a darkening of his brows — "may I ask if my duties include ——"

"They do," replied Jessie promptly.

His manner toward her friend was faultless — he exhibited no trace of annoyance — yet he bade Jessie good-night with no reference to a future engagement. This was the entrance of the serpent into Jessie's Eden, and she taxed herself with having played double and fell asleep with a suspicious moisture on her cheek.

For two days Morris did not appear. Jessie was so miserable that she, for the first time, could not enjoy a concert with Mr. Howerton. She was fretful and impatient and bade fair to find herself as devoid of cavaliers as she had once been. She scolded herself soundly before the mirror.

"To think," she observed scathingly, "that you could not abide by a business contract. When things were progressing so well you must let sentiment interfere and lead you to a silly, childish act like that. Why couldn't you let well enough alone? No; you must feign a preference for some one you know doesn't care a straw about you, of course, just to — Oh, dear! he will never come back, and he is worth all the rest."

A big tear rolled down the cheek in the mirror before the face,

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heavy with grief, dropped to the reflected slender arm on the dressing-table.

Her prediction of Morris's defection appeared verified on the succeeding morning, when a messenger sent by Mr. Bradbury arrived with Morris's formal resignation. He merely expressed regret that his services were no longer needed.

"At least," commented Jessie, "*he* was able to regard it simply as a business matter. I wish I had — or else not gone into business so extensively." Which was an admission she would not have made even to her reflected face if her plan had continued working along prescribed lines.

Everything went wrong the following day. Restless and nervous, she was unable to sleep until almost dawn, and awoke too late for breakfast. She tore her coat as she hurried into the school building two minutes late, with the rebuking eyes of the principal upon her.

"That means a fine," she groaned.

Her pupils were trying, and the day seemed interminable. Not so far distant just then rose the vision of the nerve-tinker. But possessing a perfect-working liver she grew more hopeful after she had excused herself to Mr. Howerton after dinner and summed up the situation.

"Dear me!" she reflected in the privacy of her apartment, "I need not blame my plan. The results exceeded my anticipations. I lost my head, that's all — no; it isn't, you goose, and you know it. If that were all, the damage could be repaired by an apology and a resumption of official duties."

She was perilously near tears again, but pulled herself together determinedly.

"Don't waste your time in vain regrets, foolish one," she admonished. "Take your medicine bravely. Smile now. There! that's better. Now don't let me see you crying for the unattainable again — only Paradise looked so dear," she concluded with a pathetic little droop to her mouth.

She rose briskly, put on a becoming house-gown, a recent acquisition, and tried to pin her attention to grading examination papers. Her pencil strayed and she was vexed to find herself gazing sentimentally at a virile face she had neatly executed at

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the end of a composition on "Domestic Animals," while murmuring tenderly:

"He has a firm, shapely mouth and such frank eyes."

Hurriedly she walked to the window and stood staring into the darkness. When she sat down again she leaned back in her chair with arms above a smiling face.

"Why should I try to conceal my joy?" she reasoned. "It is something I have not sought and a secret I must not betray; but it warms and fills those dull, tenantless chambers of my soul and fires my placid blood. I am happier with it hidden in my heart than I ever was before. It endows me in an hour with a keener, more sympathetic knowledge of life's meaning than I could have acquired through years of erudition. Instead of prudishly shutting my eyes to its existence, I will cherish it, gloat over it, expand through it. Yes," she nodded as her glance fell on the drawing, "I will even gratify my eyes by an expression of it, although I shall be careful to avoid such publicity as that."

In an exalted state of mind Jessie erased her pencil's lapse and applied that object to its legitimate use. The last paper was marked when she was summoned to the telephone.

Her heart fluttered as she recognized the voice inquiring for Miss Rogers. Her quavering "Yes" was to her such a betrayal of relief and joy that she demanded sharply, "To whom am I speaking?" Even under strong excitement her prepositions fell into their right places. The rules of grammar, beneath the pressure of constant expounding, had been shredded, double-pulverized and rubbed in.

After a little she hung up the receiver and with a springy step and an elevated head ascended the stairs to add some touches to her toilet. When she entered the shabby parlor she wore an opera-cloak, one of the aforesaid furbelows.

"Going out?" inquired a sister teacher who was yawning over "The Application of Froebelism."

"Yes."

"Rather late, isn't it?" her interlocutor persisted.

"A little supper," explained Jessie, wondering, when the other sniffed significantly, if she could divine that it meant the small company of two.

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The bell ringing at that moment, Jessie fastened her cloak and arranged the gauzy scarf on her head before she opened the door. She did not admit the caller, but after a brief conversation, joined him.

It was not rather late, but decidedly so, when Jessie returned. Morris followed her into the deserted parlor where, under the dim gaslight, he kissed her with an air of proprietorship before he asked:

"May I come to-morrow evening, dear?"

She blushed as she answered archly:

"I have an engagement with Mr. Howerton. It will be the last."

"The next evening, then," begged Morris, who, after receiving a favorable reply, continued musingly: "I am under immense obligations to Howerton. Without him I should never have screwed my courage to the point of terminating a wholly delightful business contract in order to prosecute an unpromising courtship. I could see how much in earnest Howerton was" — Jessie smiled indulgently — "and it drove me to desperation to have my admiration and attentions accepted as a matter of business. I cannot understand," he went on after a short, well-filled pause, "why you, surrounded by so many admirers, should take it into your dear head to pay for an escort."

"For novelty," was the truthful reply. "Wasn't that your motive also?"

Morris's affirming laugh was less hearty and not so prolonged, but his farewell partook of both qualities in a greater degree. To her glorified face in the mirror the happy woman held up a warning finger before she doubled over in silent merriment.

Punctual to the moment Mr. Howerton appeared the ensuing evening. The people of the house had so often taken themselves off when Jessie's callers came that it appeared to have been a private agreement to discontinue the custom. They lounged about reading or writing — and listening, as Jessie vexedly felt. A few minutes' conversation with her visitor was all she needed. She wanted the rest of the time to answer a lovely letter from Lindsay. Her restlessness communicated itself to Mr. Howerton, who proposed a walk.

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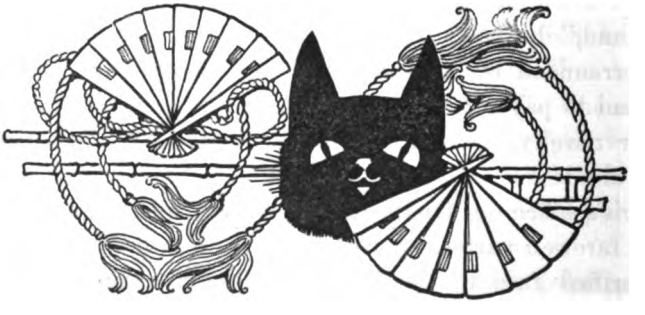
"Was that right?" he inquired when they reached the pavement.

"Exactly. I have something to say to you which I am not yet ready to tell them. I am going to be married to Lindsay Morris ——"

"I suspected as much."

"And I want to assure you how greatly I appreciate your past kindness and courtesy. Under the circumstances ——" She hesitated and he laughingly completed the sentence:

"Of course our business relations are at an end."



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The Slot-Machine of the Storms.*

BY WILLIAM CALHOUN.

"LOOK, Wilson, see what I've found!"

Bowen held in his hand a shining five-dollar gold piece which he had just picked up from the rocks.

We were on our annual outing. We had run up the river in a small steamer to the head of navigation. In a large rowboat, loaded with necessary camping outfit, we laboriously continued our course till we reached the wilderness. Here we found an old hunter and trapper named Gibbons, with whom we rested for a night. Gibbons had spent the evening telling tales of his adventures in that region. Just before retiring he told us of the cliff at which we were now snugly camped.

"You'll be apt to like it there. Plenty of game and the best fishin' along the river. A fine spring bubblin' out o' the solid rock at the foot o' the cliff. Can't recommend you to a better place. Always camp there when I'm up that way. Used to go there for money from the rocks," said Gibbons, warming up to the occasion. "For ten years, after every storm, I found gold coins scattered about on the flat rocks below the cliff. Sometimes there was much, sometimes only a little. I went often in mild weather, but never found gold except when a storm had passed over. Once I stayed a month, but not a thing did I get till a terrible wind came along, after which I found five ten-dollar gold pieces as bright as the blaze in the fire there, and though I watched for two weeks I found nothing else. Another time, when a cyclone had gone through, I found three twenty-dollar pieces. Spent a week tryin' to explain the mystery, but had to give it up. No human hand put that money there. It just rained out o' the clouds. One day, when it was blowin' a hurricane, I heard some-

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thing strike the cliff, as if it had been shot from the sky; then it fell jingling on the rocks below. Known that to happen several times.

"For ten years it was always the same old story, money after a wind and nothin' any other time. Eight years ago it stopped fallin' and, no matter how hard the wind blew, from that day to this no more money has ever been found. I guess it has all rained out. I'll take you there to-morrow."

For a half hour he answered the questions our curiosity prompted, and then we went to our cots. On the morrow, Gibbons guided us to the spot and, promising to return in a week, left us. We had established our camp under shelter of the precipitous cliff which overhung the river, eaten our supper, and were leisurely strolling about admiring the romantic surroundings, when Bowen found the money. Our surprise is now easily understood.

Under ordinary circumstances a man is surprised to find gold coins, but, with Gibbons' strange tale fresh in our ears, we stared at each other in speechless amazement. We looked the shining money over and over to make sure. We scanned the bald face of the cliff, glanced at the wild forest and the river, peered into the blue sky above, all in vain, for some clue as to the presence of the money. Then we tried for signs of recent human presence, but none existed. We searched for other coins, but found no more. Finally, we went to our couches in the tent, there to speculate and theorize on a possible explanation of the mystery, until, through sheer exhaustion, we fell into a flighty sleep.

The next morning Bowen built a fire while I went to the spring for a pail of water. On my way I passed the edge of the steep and along over the rock floor, level and white as a city pavement. I was returning when my eye caught the glitter of a twenty-dollar gold piece lying at my feet. In my excitement I called to Bowen and together we examined the rock thoroughly and found three pieces. As we had investigated well the evening before, it was clear the coins had arrived in some manner during the night. That any human being would deliberately put them there, even had it seemed possible that one could be near enough, was preposterous.

We went around to the other side of the highland, from which

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we could reach the top of the cliff, where we found ourselves on a grassy level of perhaps an acre in area. It was a beautiful spot, covered with trees and singularly free from undergrowth. The surface sloped gently away from the ledge, finally forming the floor of the dense forest in the rear.

Gibbons had told us of an Indian trader named Groom who had dwelt there in an early day and whose house was a favorite resort of Indians, trappers, and overland travelers for the far West. When a lad, Gibbons had often seen the great log cabin full of strangers. At last the Indians were removed to other lands, the overland route gradually changed to better paths, and Groom was deserted by his old customers. One day he was found dead. He was buried beneath his hearthstone, and then the locality slowly drifted back to its primitive condition. All that remained of the house was a tall stone chimney, near the edge of the precipice. By this old ruin stood the trunk of what had once been a great sugar tree.

Nothing about the place, however, seemed to have any possible connection with the gold. The history of the spot gave no explanation of the presence of coins at the base of the ledge fifty years later. Bowen and I examined the chimney, but found naught save the ragged stones. The stubby old sugar tree by it creaked in the breeze. This forsaken acre furnished no trace at all, and we descended. We did little else for several days, except to fruitlessly investigate and theorize. Strangely, too, we found no more coins, though we watched persistently.

At the end of the week, according to promise, Gibbons arrived. He heard our experience with interest on only one point, the fact that the phenomenon should recur after years of cessation. To our conjectures he paid little attention.

"No use tryin'," said he skeptically, "I've investigated every nook and cranny. Spent ten years watchin' and pryin', off and on, 'round this old headland, crackin' my brain over the cause. Have sat all night and all day, more times than I'm years old, tryin' to discover the secret, and all I ever learned was to hear the sudden jingle of the metal when it struck the cliff in time of storm and rattled down. It wasn't thrown from the top, for I've heard it while sitting at the foot of the chimney up there in

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broad daylight. You may study it till you're old, and that's all you'll ever know."

As we discussed the matter a gale began blowing. It grew stronger rapidly and was accompanied by the rumblings of distant thunder. Huge black clouds approached with frightful velocity. In our location under the precipice, protected from the gathering storm, we could watch the trees lash each other like whips.

Suddenly, as if by magic, two gold eagles dropped straight from the clouds overhead and rang resonantly on the stones near. No chance this time for mistaken senses, as three of us witnessed their descent. They came from the storm-laden sky, no doubt at all about it. Then came another and another, and following them a shower of coins. It seemed a dozen or more were jingling around us. A fearful peal of thunder heralded a fresh burst of the angry elements and the wind raged with the fury of demons. We heard a deafening crash overhead and the old chimney came tumbling in a heap to the foot of the cliff, the sugar tree with it. Then the velocity of the wind began to slacken, the sound of crashing timber ceased, and the storm gradually subsided.

When our fears were somewhat allayed we began to reconnoitre. Near the heap made by the fallen chimney we found a distorted tube, resembling the gutters and conductors placed at the eaves of houses. It was battered, rusty and rotten with age and contained several heaping handfuls of coins and a number of musty parchments and papers. On examining the wreckage of the chimney we found that the tube had been carefully placed in a chamber specially arranged for its reception. Two slits had rusted in the sides of the tin, one a few inches from the bottom and the other higher up. It was evident that the heavy winds, shaking the sugar tree and the chimney, had made of the tube a nickel-in-the-slot machine, by forcing coins through the narrow apertures. After the coins had worked down to the level of the higher slot it was eight years before the second and lower one rusted through, thus causing the dropping to resume. As the tube, by the weathering of the chimney, lay inclined, it formed a sort of shute. A coin, once slipping through, slid along the spouting for a few inches and finally shot over the precipice, having the appearance of coming from skyward.

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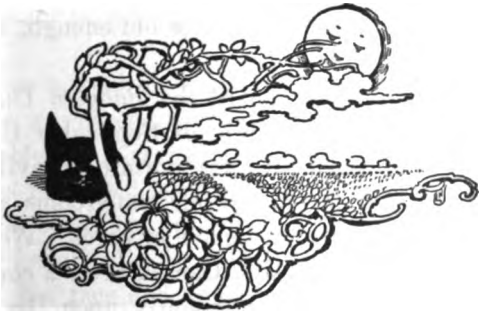
We found papers recording the honorable discharge of Malachi Groom as a veteran of the War of 1812, and a package of letters written by his sweetheart, Cecilia Bliss, concerning whom we learned some strange facts from a faded manuscript. She had been captured by the Indians. On Groom's discharge he had made diligent search and ascertained that she had perished at the stake a few feet from the old sugar tree. He gathered the ashes and buried them where the stake had stood and erected the stone chimney above the spot, adding to it the cabin that he might dwell near her resting place. On the will was the indistinct signature of *the old* soldier, bestowing the money to the finder, on condition *that the* letters be laid by Groom's side. Under Gibbons' guidance we reburied the letters beneath the old hearthstone near which the ashes of his sweetheart had reposed for ninety years.



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The Sword of His Father.*

BY ETHEL CLAIRE RANDALL.

WE were six who sat about the table under the garish light of the swinging lamp. A Mr. Baroque took the head, opposite to him was Major Millait, a portly cavalryman with chin blue from much shaving, on his right were my brother and myself, while our vis-à-vis was a well-known opera singer — Mrs. Cantel in private life — and a boy of nineteen or thereabouts, whose name appeared on the passenger list as "K. Sinhala." This lad seemed greatly attracted to Mr. Baroque, with whom he entered into conversation. He told the elder man that he was a foreigner, a Cingalese by birth, and an orphan, that he had gone to a Catholic mission school where he had learned music, English, French and Latin, and where he had been befriended by the old priest, whom he was now on his way to visit. He added, further, that he had a notion of becoming a priest later on, when he should be old enough, and had seen a bit of the world.

Such were the passengers aboard the *Babylon City,* bound to Chicago from Buffalo on this night of September the twentieth, nineteen hundred and seven. It was storming heavily, but being good sailors we scorned to take to our state-rooms and gathered about the table in the cabin for a game of cards. We were in the thick of a second game when Mrs. Cantel, after a continuous run of bad luck, threw her hand impatiently upon the cloth. The cards slid in regular procession, one after another, to the floor, as the boat rolled to a sudden swell. With light laughter we caught at the table edge to steady ourselves.

"Just the night for ghost-stories," I suggested, seeing that no one made a move to resume the play.

"Ghost-stories are passé," avowed Mrs. Cantel. "The fash-

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ionable method of counteracting sleep is to have one's mind read."

"Mind reading, hey!" cried the Major. "I've heard a lot about the Indian beggars being able to tell what one thinks, but I'd give a fiver to see it done."

"Can't be done!" The manner of Mr. Baroque's abrupt assertion winged the thought across my brain that its finality of sentence was less a mere statement of fact than a desire to foster conviction in himself.

At this moment, however, and amid the "Ohs!" and the "Ahs!" and the "Then how the deuce do you account for so-and-so?" of Mrs. Cantel and the Major, my brother addressed the young foreigner, who had been silent since the card playing ceased.

"Is it true, Mr. Sinhala, that your countrymen have a special gift that way?"

"Hey! do you mean to say, young man, that you can read my mind?" burst in the Major.

The boy bowed an affirmative and turned to my brother.

"The Brahmn holy men undoubtedly can fathom the innermost workings of another's mind. It is a characteristic trait in some families in India and elsewhere in the Orient, as much as is the peculiar color or setting of the eye, or the shape of the hand, in others."

No one of us missed his reply. Not that he spoke loudly. Indeed his voice was exceedingly low pitched. But its halting tones were memorable for a caressing quality that in sonorous and vibrant richness reminded one irresistibly of the timbre of a muted 'cello. We stared at him in a silence that throbbed with the dead echoes of his beautiful voice. But beyond his being well enough to look upon, the face and figure revealed nothing appreciable of their personality. Yet one's instinct groped for the *something* that lay masked behind the studiously observed conventionality. I noted the repose of the figure, and read into the attitude a latent restlessness akin to the glozed calm of an animal on the spoor of its prey. My glance dropped to the hands resting on the green baize of the table covering, and I thought I could trace more than a suggestion of cruelty in the careless interlacing of the fine, long fingers. Still, the face, except for an Eastern gravity that to our

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Occidental eyes embued it with subtlety, contradicted these impressions. I was laughing at myself for a visionary, when I caught the look Mr. Baroque had fixed on Sinhala's face. It was a gaze of such searching, yet at the same time, such puzzled inquiry, of such agonized questioning — as if it asked out of the longing of a lifetime that the boy's countenance give to him the key to its mystery, that my thoughts rebounded upon themselves. That look, though it met merely one of conventional regard, set these two apart from the others about the board, linked them together, as it were, in some intangible way, clearly felt, but not at all understood. What mute demand had been made by Mr. Baroque, what answer would be vouchsafed?

The momentary pause brought us to ourselves. The Major cleared his throat, Mr. Baroque shrugged his shoulders like a man trying to rid himself of an uncanny dread, and the spell was broken.

"But what have you to do when you read one's mind?" queried Mrs. Cantel, with a shiver that was not altogether affected.

"Simply allow me to place my hand on yours, Mrs. Cantel."

As Mrs. Cantel hesitated and looked foolish, I thrust mine across the table toward him. He pushed it away with a sudden smile, and I drew back abashed and somewhat hurt, while he turned from me to Mr. Baroque with what I fancied was a gleam of sinister triumph in his laughing glance. He put one hand firmly over his neighbor's clasped ones.

"A penny for Mr. Baroque's thoughts? Who buys?"

"Yes, yes, surely we will" — "five," "ten," "one hundred," we chorused, and the Major renewed his offer of a "fiver, begad."

Mr. Baroque sat as if turned to stone. Abruptly Sinhala began to speak:

"A seemingly interminable road winds through a tropical forest. From its either side gigantic trees throw their branches together in the semblance of an arch, so that its dim whiteness alone makes it discernable even in the glare of mid-day. Along this highway a horseman rides leisurely, his head bent in thought, his eyes upon the path. Almost at his horse's feet lie a few stones roughly, forming the device of a swastika with straggling arms. By another observer the symbol would have been passed unnoticed,

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but to this man, a lover of Romany traditions and a frequenter of gypsy encampments, it is as full of significance as was one knight's coat-of-arms to a fellow-knight in the days of chivalry. It tells him that a family of a certain Romany tribe has passed that way. Certain of being able to overtake them, he touches up his horse.

"Soon he sees a moving shadow ahead of him, and makes out a cart, such as Flemish milk-carriers use, drawn by a woman and a dog. In answer to his hail the strange caravan halts. The woman, on hearing his greeting in her native speech, drops the cross-bar of the cart-tongue, against which she has been straining, and advances a step or two, while her trace-mate, a huge, gaunt, white dog, sinks panting in his tracks. The occupant of the cart raises his head to stare at the traveller with eyes burning-bright from fever. For a second the horseman is afraid — afraid of the silent group. The fancy flashes across his brain that in all but their eyes — the six great balls of fire glaring through the dusk into his — these wayfarers are dead. The ragged woman, who is yet but a slip of a girl with a small, triangular face framed in gossamer-like hair, is dead; the man with his tangled black curls and skeleton figure, is dead; the phantom white dog is dead.

"With an effort the horseman shakes off the illusion as the utter destitution of their circumstances and the hopelessness of the man's fight for life forces itself upon him. He offers them his hospitality — they are upon his plantation now — and it is but the length of the road to his bungalow. And the girl, seeing a friend in their sore straits, accepts for her father, who she says, was cruelly hurt a month or so ago. Thus, with the tacit understanding of good-fellowship between them, they make all haste to the house, where everything possible is done for the sick man's comfort.

"But without avail. In less than a month Zillah, for such is the girl's name, Zillah and the dog are alone in the world. Then all the chivalry in the man's nature wells up, and he, suddenly aware that the girl he has hitherto regarded as a mere child, is in reality a woman, marries her out of hand.

"For a few years, life on the plantation is an idyll. But one day the man tires — the next he is gone."

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The speaker paused as brusquely as he had plunged into his narrative. I looked at Mr. Baroque, the grewsome imagery of the story's horseman fastening itself upon me, for the man had not stirred since the beginning of the recital, though his distended eyes now gazed beyond Sinhala into space. The Cingalese folded his arms across his chest and recommenced.

"With her child in her arms, the gypsy wife goes in search of its father, the love she has borne him sharpened to the rankle of hate. Her purpose drives her east and west and north and south relentlessly, till, wearied by bootless wanderings, she returns to the plantation to find the valley choked with flotsam. Poverty-stricken, without strength for further effort, she leaves her son in the care of the mission Fathers. They, good men, labor to erase from the boy's mind the understanding, even the memory of his mother's legacy, not realizing that a heritage of hate once bequeathed can never be obliterated from the heart of a gypsy, for the stubble will roughen the field long after the harvest is garnered. And the harvest is to him who will but wait."

Sinhala pushed back his chair and rose from the table.

"Voici le sabre de mon père," he said, bowing nonchalantly to the company.

Instinctively we turned with one accord to Mr. Baroque.

He was dead in his chair.

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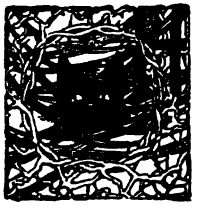
The Burglar from Heaven.*

BY JENNIE MARTHA CHENERY.



HIS study was shrouded in darkness, but David Graham was still sitting by the desk alone. The realization of his loneliness was so intense, so piercing, that he felt like one who, in a horrid nightmare, is hurled suddenly over the brink of a precipice and, by a flash of blasting thought, knows himself to be face to face with doom.

His genial, sunny disposition had delighted in sunshine, in vivid coloring, and all other beautiful, glowing marvels which Nature bestows upon her children, and now — the darkness seemed to clutch him with cold, blighting fingers, withering hope and joy with its poisonous touch. It was not only that the darkness of night had veiled the earth for a time from mortal view — far blacker were the grim shadows that enveloped David's soul, shutting him off forever from love and happiness. For he was blind.

At first he would not believe the dread verdict of the great specialist. He had listened, as in a dream, to a learned discourse about brain fever, paralysis of the optic nerve, and other technical phrases, but hope had died hard, and not until today had he accepted his fate as final, acknowledging that man, with all his science, could do no more. By a miracle, only, could his sight be restored.

The news had, in a measure, stunned him. To be sure, he vaguely comprehended that he would be obliged to adjust all his life-mechanism to this strange and terrible condition of affairs. But tonight he was not thinking of the ordinary details of existence which he must now learn to master in the slow, helpless way of the blind. It was the deep agony of blasted love, of dying hope, with which he wrestled as with a mortal foe, praying and

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struggling alone in his despair, calling upon his Maker for strength to complete the last great act of renunciation.

"Constance, Constance!" he groaned, "why are you so faithful? It would be easier, — far easier — if you would scorn me now, worthless creature that I am," — and yet, in his inmost heart, there was a gleam of comfort in the knowledge that of her own free will the woman he loved would never give him up.

For him love had bloomed with such rare and matchless beauty that all the earth had been bright with its dazzling glory. Before Constance came into his life he had never cared much for women, and now, in this hour of crushing tragedy, his frantic, over-wrought mind sought vainly for a solution of the great mystery of love. Why should the world be transformed into a Paradise because of a woman's smile, and as suddenly changed to a dreary Purgatory when the hand of Fate drops the black curtain of separation, forever severing two faithful hearts!

The fearful chaos which reigned in his mind obliterated, for the time being, all sense of his surroundings. Time had no value. A distant bell solemnly counted the hour of ten; he heard, but heeded not. Moments came when he was almost mastered by the temptation to accept the sacrifice so freely offered, to clasp in his the tender hand that would lead him with loving patience over the rayless fields of life. Then again he despised himself for harboring such a thought. Never — never would he be guilty of such selfishness — and, even as he pondered, again the lingering notes of the bell tolled off another hour that had passed into eternity.

One by one the moments glided by, but with their passing there came a change in David's mental condition. Gradually a wondrous sense of exultation crept over his troubled mind, as if the over-ruling Power had whispered words of peace and strength. The mantle of doubt and hesitation fell away from him, and he was clothed in the shining robe of righteous resolution. It would be drinking to the dregs the bitterest draught of life, but he was ready now to drain the cup — alone.

As he rose from his chair — a conquerer — the deep-voiced guardian of the night proclaimed, in stately measure, the mystic hour of twelve.

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For the first time David was conscious of the death-like silence that reigned about him. The servants' rooms were in another part of the house and, even if any of them were still moving about, the noise could not penetrate to the study. His mother and sister had retired to their rooms hours before. They had begged to sit with him, thinking, in the depths of their loving hearts, that they might be of some comfort to their "boy" on this terrible evening when he walked with despair, but in the extremity of his anguish he had longed for solitude, to fight his battle out to the bitter end with no eye to witness his sufferings. He had even dismissed his own attendant, Logan, saying that he would waken him if necessary. The faithful fellow had gone away, reluctantly, to his bedroom, a small apartment which opened into David's dressing room, and peace had reigned supreme, except in that one troubled heart, facing the bitterness of death.

Now, as the deep notes of the great bell swung through the silent night, a great longing fell upon him for the sound of a human voice, and he groped his way slowly to the door. His rooms were directly opposite to the study, and he thought that there could be no danger in crossing the corridor, although the stairs leading down to the entrance hall were not far away.

Softly he closed the study door and then paused, with hands outstretched, unsteadily. He was weak from long fasting, having eaten nothing since noon, and the darkness oppressed him with a sense of suffocation, causing his head to whirl. A moment he stood thus, and then, as he was about to advance a step or two, a disagreeable thrill shot through him with the force of an electric shock, nailing him to the floor.

The intense silence had not been broken by any perceptible sound, and yet David knew, by the voice of that subtle, mysterious sense which never lies, that his solitude was broken by an alien presence — that danger crouched beside him.

His courage rose instantly to meet the emergency. A quick challenge sprang to his lips, but common sense silenced it before the rash words were spoken. Naturally daring and impulsive, David now found it difficult to restrain himself; every fibre of his being cried out in anger and despair at his awful helplessness.

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But his mind was as clear as glass, and he reasoned with lightning-like rapidity.

If a burglar had obtained entrance, he must be a fellow of stout nerve, willing to take desperate chances. It was an undeviating custom of the house to have an electric light burning all night in the reception hall, and also in the long upper corridor where David now stood. By a clever mechanical device this was secured in such a manner that it was impossible for strangers to turn it off. Therefore David knew that the intruder would realize the great danger that he was facing in making his way through a lighted house where, at any moment, some one might chance to see him, without being seen.

The blind man jumped to the conclusion that the burglar — if such his midnight visitor proved to be — had been obliged to run this risk. There was a window at the end of the corridor, which one might reach from the porch below, and it would, of course, be necessary to traverse the lighted hall, in order to reach the bedrooms, and the dining-room on the lower floor, where a thief would naturally expect to find the silver.

Probably it did not take more than half a minute for all this to pass through David's mind, and with it the further assumption that the burglar would instantly perceive the condition of the man who had thus suddenly crossed his path, and, thinking himself undiscovered, would allow the unconscious enemy to pass on in peace, rather than precipitate disturbance.

Consequently, David thought it might be possible for him to gain his own room, arouse Logan, and summon the police by telephone before the burglar would know that he was trapped.

He leaned heavily back against the door, with one hand pressed to his head, as if his hesitation were caused by weakness, then with outstretched arms advanced slowly, with faltering steps, in the direction of his dressing-room door.

But, seemingly, Fate was against him. He was still weak and nervous from his long illness, and the fearful strain of the past day, and now the strong excitement which possessed him proved to be the last straw. A deathly faintness crept over his senses and he staggered heavily from side to side. With all his pitiful remnant of strength he strove to regain his balance, but it was

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in vain. He felt himself falling — falling, and with a last desperate effort threw out his hands, seizing in a vise-like grip the object with which they came in contact.

He vaguely comprehended, as in a half-waking state, that a human being was in his grasp, heard, as from a distance, the sound of an angry oath, and then down the long flight of stairs they went together, bumping, rolling, crashing, until David felt a sudden, sharp, agonizing blow on the side of his head, and then — a moment of oblivion.

It was not a cheerful tableau which was revealed by the softly shaded light, although the lofty hall, with its beautiful furnishings, made an artistic background, but the attitudes of the two men who lay there in a heap against the heavy oaken hall settee were terribly suggestive of death.

David Graham was the first to recover consciousness, and he took advantage of it to grasp the intruder firmly by the throat. As he slowly raised himself to a sitting posture upon the prostrate body, a fog seemed to lift from his dazed intelligence, and then —

God! Could it be true? He found himself gazing into the burglar's blinking little ferret eyes, and noting that the burglar's hair was red!

Had the days of miracles returned? Could he really see? He caught a deep breath and gasped:

"Who are you? — what are you doing here? — where did you come from?"

"Dey calls me Reddy Dugan — but me real name's Jerry — an' I comes from Heaven! Dat's over beyond de flats, yer know! I hain't swiped a t'ing — honest to God, I hain't! I t'ought youse lamps wuz out!"

"No," — said David, pulling himself and the man to their feet, and gazing about — "the lamps are working all right!"

"Yer eyes, I meant, boss — I t'ought youse wuz blind."

"You're right," answered David Graham, "I was, but now, thank God, I can see as well as ever!"

The slam of a closing door came to their ears from above.

"Hush! Go!" whispered David, urging the burglar toward the outer door — "Out — and make no noise. I won't tell of

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your visit!" — and he pushed Jerry Dugan out into the darkness.

"Oh, Mr. Graham, I thought I heard someone fall downstairs!" exclaimed Logan, coming into view. "Why — I — are you looking at me, Mr. Graham — can you see?"

"Yes, Logan, but don't rouse the house. The good news will keep till morning."

But in the silence of his room again, he whispered, passionately:

"O Constance! God has been very good tonight — though he chose as His instrument a burglar from Heaven!"

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Zinklefoot's Find.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

ORE than ten thousand men, whose lives lost their savor through the attainment of something which they had pursued for years, have pointed out that the joy of pursuit is a thousand times greater than that of possession. Preacher Zinklefoot recognized this when a black head rose from the mosaic of white faces in response to his call of "Henry Hutton." Zinklefoot suddenly discovered that he didn't want Hutton — he only wanted to look for him.

His hunt for Hutton had commenced in a peculiar manner. Five years before, while addressing a revivalist meeting at Decatur, Tennessee, a white-haired woman had asked the preacher to call the name of her wandering son at every meeting he addressed. Zinklefoot promised. Quite unconsciously the woman had provided him with a trump act for his oratorical turn.

For the first few weeks after the duty had been put upon him, he told the story in as few words as possible, and called the name of the prodigal in a matter-of-fact way. Then the dramatic possibilities of the incident stirred him. He realized that he had a gem in his repertoire. He put in subtle touches. He braced the story with little pillars of pathos. With vivid oratorical flashes he pictured the waiting mother, and flung upon the minds of his audiences a picture of the storm-tossed prodigal for whose return she waited. It was a unique turn. The telling of the incident and the solemn calling of the name, tore the crust off the little pools of sentiment in the hearts of his male listeners, and threw the women into hysterics. It was a grand climax to his orations. It left the crowds gasping, hoping, praying, and feeling mighty well disposed towards Zinklefoot, the unpaid scout of the white-haired mother of Decatur.

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And after five years of uninterrupted possession of this act that he had adapted and brought to perfection, the preacher saw it suddenly torn away from him, and the nightly kudos lost for ever. No wonder that the uprising of the black head chilled him. A hate for the stranger surged up within him. Instinctively he knew that here was the long lost Hutton, and he also knew that the white-haired mother story was gone for ever.

The black-headed man appeared at Weehawpville. Zinklefoot was winding up a successful meeting, and it was the moment for the "Henry Hutton" act. He advanced to the edge of the platform and waited till the smallest whispers had been choked by the silence.

"Friends," he cried, "some years ago when speaking at Decatur, Tennessee, a white-haired mother asked me to call the name of her wandering son at every meeting I addressed. She, poor woman, filled with maternal love — hungry motherly love, stored and gathered through the years, ready to be lavished upon the prodigal, thought that he might be guided to one of my meetings to hear her message. I promised her, and I have kept my promise. Night after night, year after year, over the broad breast of the Union I have called his name, listening, waiting, hoping always to hear the answering voice that will bring joy to the heart of the little white-haired woman in far off Tennessee."

The sound of suppressed sobs came from the audience, and Zinklefoot swept up the dizzy heights of oratory that he had built up before reaching the climax. The mother at Decatur shone out like a snowy-headed angel, and tears dropped upon the green grass as he thrilled his hearers with the story of her love and devotion. At last he straightened himself and called the name of the prodigal.

"Henry Hutton!" The call went ringing through the night, and the listeners held their breath. "Henry Hutton! Henry —"

Zinklefoot's voice seemed to fall into a bottomless chasm as a black head rose in the centre of the crowd. The head had the same effect upon him as a blow from a clenched fist, and he staggered.

"I'm Henry Hutton of Decatur," said the man standing.

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Weehawpville will not forget the scene that followed. The discovery of the prodigal was intensely dramatic, and as the inhabitants of the town had few opportunities for letting themselves go, they seized upon the one made by Zinklefoot. Men struggled to get near the wanderer; women wept hysterically. Hutton was carried shoulder high to the platform, and the preacher's commands for silence were lost in cheers and sobs. Women sobbed, men sobbed, and the prodigal sobbed. Only Zinklefoot was calm, but Zinklefoot's endeavors to calm the others were unheeded. He had stirred a monster tidal wave of sentiment that billowed around Hutton and left Zinklefoot stranded on the cold stones of neglect. Instead of being the leading actor he dropped back into the shade and stood there without a part.

The genius who always discovers the psychological moment, discovered it at that instant in the interest of Henry Hutton. He may have been a friend of the prodigal, for Weehawpville was unsuccessful in locating him amongst its citizens on the following day, but over the tumult the genius announced that the wanderer would go back to the white-haired mother in Decatur at once if he had his transportation.

Weehawpville shouted the information, and then proceeded to demolish the little barrier that stood between the reunion of the white-haired mother and the long lost son. Weehawpville was in a generous mood. Weehawpville had been tapped on its deepest vein of sentiment, and with cheers and sobs they proved that the ore was good. When silence was at last restored, the wanderer was stammering his thanks for the eighty-three dollars that had been stuffed into the pockets of his ragged clothes. Then Weehawpville sobbed again, and after carrying the stranger to a hotel, the inhabitants went home, still sobbing as their imaginations pictured the meeting in far off Tennessee.

. . . . . .

At daybreak next morning Preacher Zinklefoot startled the lodgers at the hotel by banging heavily at the front entrance, and when the annoyed landlord admitted him, he yelled loudly for the prodigal.

"Left by the three o'clock mail," snapped the proprietor. "Real anxious to see his old woman again."

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Zinklefoot clung to the door. "Read — read that," he gasped. The landlord took the sheet of yellow paper and read aloud:

ZINKLEFOOT, WEEHAWPVILLE.

Henry Hutton returned two years ago. Mother dead nine months. Your man evidently a fraud.

CHIEF OF POLICE, *Decatur*.

The landlord stared at the distressed preacher. "If I was you," he said solemnly, "I wouldn't show that to the crowd. They'll lynch you for putting the bait on the hook so that bunco guy could land them."

But Zinklefoot didn't hear the advice. He had fainted.

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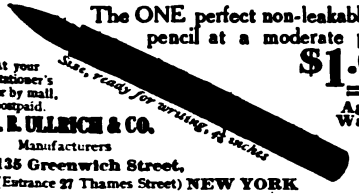

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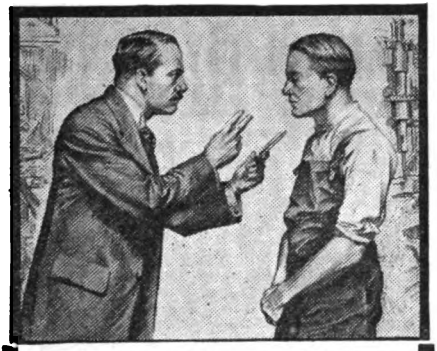

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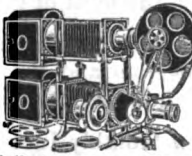

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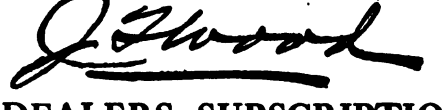

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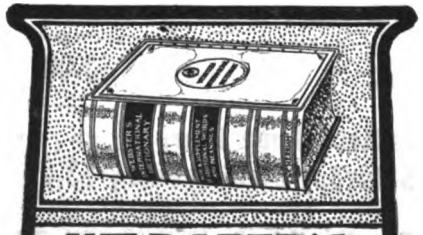

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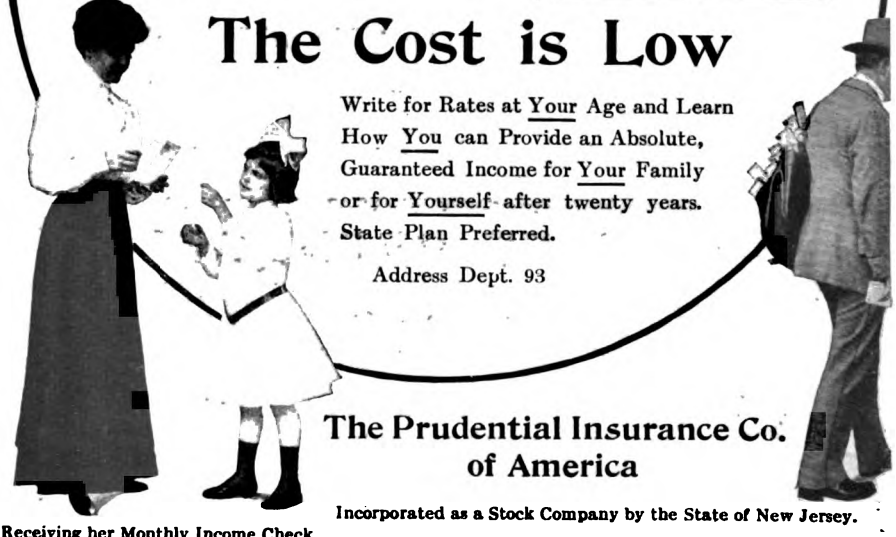

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Vol. XIV., No. 2. Whole No., 150

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The Farm of the Unseen Hands.*

BY JOHN KENNETH TURNER.

IT was the only rabbit I had seen in an hour and I was determined to dodge along in his wake for a mile, if necessary, to get a shot at him. The only thing that worried me was that he might flatten himself behind a clump of bunch-grass and that I'd never get sight of him again, or that he might make for that field of wild sunflowers to the right and successfully lose himself from me there.

I didn't need that rabbit one bit. If I should kill him and take him back to the farm my hostess wouldn't think of cooking him, and if she should cook him I wouldn't think of eating him. California folks invariably make a wry face when you speak of eating jack-rabbits.

And yet there I was, crawling along the ground on all fours, cautiously poking my head up every few yards to keep track of my quarry, sweating like a coolie, working harder than I would work in days and days back in the city. Ah, well, after all, that's what I'd come to the country for. But how scarce the game was hereabouts, especially for a district where farmhouses were never nearer than a half mile apart!

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Sure enough, B'rer Rabbit, mildly suspicious of the strange animal crawling clumsily among the bunch-grass, ambled leisurely over toward the right and, leaving the pasture, passed under a couple of fences and into the heavy stand of tall sunflowers in the field beyond. I cursed my luck, but scrambled to my feet and followed. Plunging in among the yellow-haired maidens of the weed folk, I threshed about a bit, then suddenly my feet touched fresh earth and I found myself on the edge of a plowed field. That sunflower strip was not more than fifty feet across.

Eagerly I looked about for the long-eared fugitive, but saw him not. In the field, two hundred yards distant, a plow team was at work. At my first glance I noticed nothing peculiar about it. At the second I gasped in amazement. Great Jehoshaphat! The team had no driver!

"A plow team working without a driver — that certainly beats me!" I muttered, after a long stare in which I entirely forgot my rabbit. "When I was a youngster on the farm I prided myself on having the best trained team in the universe. Used to go to sleep on the plow regularly, but I never could have left them and gone off fishing."

As I gazed across the expanse of freshly turned sod, the plow came to a corner. It was a gang plow, drawn by six horses, and the instant the foremost shear cut through to the cross furrow the six halted, the off leader bumped into his mate and, shoving to the left, swung the team about. A quarter of a minute later they were moving in perfect order down the field, the shears as true to the furrow as if I had set them myself!

"Well done!" I exclaimed. "Off leader, you're a wonder. I'd bet my hat you're a retired circus plug who's been educated to the science and art of agriculture in your old age. Say, what a hot grape-vine story that 'ud make for the Sunday Journal!"

As I watched, the six bent forward in their collars, pulling steadily and evenly, their heads bobbing up and down like pump handles, putting as much vim into their task as if a driver were actually behind, urging them forward with whip and voice.

Suddenly I noticed that one of the six was beginning to lag. Then an astonishing thing happened. The lagging animal plunged forward in the harness, as if in terror of a hissing whip-lash. The

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next instant a large clod struck and crumbled upon the horse's flank!

Right then I decided that I preferred the other side of that jungle of sunflowers. In one jump I was in the midst of them and in about two more I was over the fence. Then I decided that I was cross-eyed and a fool, that I hadn't seen anything queer at all. Back I went, but this time I was careful to crouch low and stop as soon as I could see between the tall green stalks and into the field beyond. Funny, isn't it, how a man is scared half to death by the mere sight of something he can't explain?

Well, that clod stunt was no dream. I saw it repeated, as plain as the nose on your face, and this time I caught sight of the clod as it flew through the air, hurled, apparently, from a spot alongside the plow. More than that, a minute later I saw the team halt suddenly between corners, then, just as suddenly, pricking up their ears as if at a word of command, the horses started briskly forward again.

Arctic chills playing hide and seek along the hills and hollows of my spine and each particular hair of my head developing a surprising ambition to stand alone, I again hurried back through the sunflower screen, climbed the fence and slunk along beside it. I was in what is known to farmers as a devil's lane, a path scarcely four feet wide dividing the properties of neighbors not neighborly enough to pool interests in the building of a barrier. As I slunk I held a fierce debate with myself as to whether to break and run like all possessed, or to go back, boldly cross the field and see for myself at close range what in blazes was throwing clods at those driverless horses. As a compromise while the debate was raging, I held my gun, full-cocked, at a ready angle and glanced backward over my shoulder at every other step.

It was odd how thick those sunflowers grew along the fence at my left, and how the fringe extended as far as I could see. It was singular, too, how many signs were posted hinting of sudden and dreadful calamity to trespassers. Trespassers! One wouldn't expect to see a stranger strolling this way as often as once a year. The ranch was a lonely one, being set back against a river and nearly surrounded by pasture lands; it was certainly well situated for the long concealment of unusual practices of any sort.

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Finally my inordinate curiosity — a characteristic which has caused me to make a fool of myself many a time, but which is a valuable asset in my trade, newspaper work — led me to again brave the weed forest at my left.

I discovered that I had traveled beyond the limits of the plowed lot and was now facing a field sweet with the scent of new-mown hay. Like giant beehives the shocks of hay dotted the field, while in the centre a stack was growing. Afar a hay-wagon, drawn by four horses, was gathering up the hay-cones. I could see no workmen, but supposed that they were on the far side of the wagon.

Soon the loaded wagon swung around and started for the stack, and then I observed that no driver was upon the high seat.

"Great Barnums! More circus horses!" I exclaimed.

But even as I spoke the lines were drawn taut, a whip-stock flourished in the air and a long lash writhed like a snake above the backs of the four. On the instant the team broke into a trot. Was the atmosphere playing me mad pranks? Or had I been suddenly assailed by a strange and bewildering affliction of the eyes?

Executing a neat turn the team slid the wagon-bed snugly against the side of the stack. Then my eyes nearly dropped from their sockets. Two pitch-forks raised themselves on top of the load and, with easy, natural strokes, began tossing the hay on to the stack. On the summit of the stack a third fork was in action, shifting a bit of hay here, spreading a tangle there, building up the stack in another place. Nowhere could I see a human being. The hands that gripped the helves of those nimble forks were invisible to me. I stayed to look no more. Choking in the clutch of a nameless terror, I stampeded through the sunflowers, crossed the devil's lane into the pasture and tore madly in the direction of the farm at which I boarded.

I ran crazily as long as my breath would let me and then I stopped. My boarding place was still a mile away. Moreover, I would make myself ridiculous by dashing breathless and wild-eyed into the presence of the farmer and his family. It was very likely that I had gone insane — that my much needed respite from the demands of newspaper life had come too late — yet if I must

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go to the asylum I wanted to do it quietly, without sensational scare-heads, without the mortification of making the trip in handcuffs chained to some country constable. Flushed and panting, I sat down on a grassy knoll, taking care, however, to face the source of my flight.

Then I remembered.

"It's the Cobb ranch!" I exclaimed. "Why didn't I think of that before?"

My host had casually mentioned the place to me as I started out with my gun on my shoulder.

"Better not stray on to the Cobb ranch," he had remarked. "Somebody might take a shot at you if you do. It's a couple o' miles down the river and you'll know it by the fringe of sunflowers and the 'keep out' signs on the posts. That's one ranch everybody hereabouts has learned to fight shy of."

When I reached the home of my host I said nothing of the startling things I had seen that day — or thought I had seen — but after supper I unconcernedly questioned my host about the mysterious farm and its owner. I learned that the Cobbs, a middle-aged couple, had moved in from nobody knew where some seven years previously. They had bought the most isolated farm in that section of the county, a place of four hundred acres, but had been able to pay only a small fraction of the purchase price. Neighbors had freely predicted that the place would revert to the former owner, but, to their surprise, the entire debt had been settled in four years' time. The Cobbs had prospered wonderfully. They had purchased another one hundred acres of land adjoining their own and were now negotiating for another two hundred acres.

Since their advent, I learned, the Cobbs had never visited or willingly received a visitor. Persons who had, for one reason or another, wished to call on them, had found a padlock on the outside gate. On essaying to enter despite this, they had been summarily ordered away and told that they might entrust their business to a letter or arrange for a personal interview with the proprietor in the neighboring town. Even the county assessor was not allowed to enter that gate without having first apprised Cyrus Cobb by mail of the date of his coming.

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The most enigmatical fact of all about the Cobbs, however, was their mysterious method of operating their place. It was admitted to be a physical impossibility for one man to work the farm alone, and yet in all the seven years of their residence the Cobbs had not been known to hire or discharge a farm-hand. If they employed any hands at all, nobody had ever had so much as a glimpse of them. Daily, Cyrus Cobb drove to a near-by skimming station with the milk of a score of cows. Several times a year he herded a band of hogs to market or sold a few hundred chickens. He raised hay, wheat and barley. Yet when people met him on the road or in town they noticed that he never looked worried or overworked. They wondered dully how he got his work done. Sometimes they speculated half humorously among themselves, but they never investigated. After their first friendly advances had been rebuffed they left Cyrus Cobb and his ranch severely alone. Evidently none of them had seen what I myself had seen that day, else the countryside would have rung with the story.

After catechising my landlord I decided that, after all, I had been afflicted with no illusion of the sight or aberration of the brain. I was convinced that I had run upon a mystery unparalleled in any of my excursions into either fact or fiction.

I had delved almost not at all in the realm of ghosts, apparitions and such, and took no stock in them. Only once, I remembered, some ten years previous, had I attended a spiritualistic seance, and that time, though all the other attendants at the affair had expressed a strong conviction of the genuineness of the phenomena, I had merely laughed within myself and said: "How easy! Give me a phonograph trumpet, a cabinet, a bed-sheet, an old guitar and some preparation that will make that lamp burst into flame when I turn up the wick, and I can duplicate the performance myself without a single rehearsal."

But in my newspaper account of the seance I had not said these things. I had told just what I had seen, what I had heard, and let the reader draw his own conclusions. That the reader had chosen to take my story as an evidence of the reality of spirit materialization was no fault of mine.

A bitter quarrel between rival mediums culminating in mutual accusations of trickery and public denunciations was what had

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given rise to my little newspaper investigation. Hiram Canby, the medium whose flirtation with the denizens of another world I had written up, had looked upon my "story" as a complete vindication of himself. He had thanked me profusely for my "fairness" and had wished me all sorts of fine luck in the future, promising me the good offices of all the spectres at his command.

Canby was a tall, gaunt, hump-shouldered fellow, with the features of a Turk and a hairless face spotted like the sides of a leopard. He lacked eyebrows, his bald head was covered with a thick, curly black wig, and his large, dark eyes glowed from the depths of their cavernous sockets like a wolf's eyes shining from the bottom of his den. At the time I knew him, Canby's spook business was only a side line, the chief support for himself and wife being a small second-hand store which he dubbed "The Old Curiosity Shop." His favorite "control" was a shade known as Oklahoma Jones, famed in the little city for his quick knock-outs of over-inquisitive persons, for more than one rash young man had suffered a broken head while striking a match at a seance or otherwise trying to test for himself the reality of Canby's trumpet-whispering sprites.

Despite several hours of midnight pondering, I arose with my mind as far as ever from a solution of the Cobb ranch mystery. However, the night had brought me one conclusion — that I would make a desperate attempt to penetrate the puzzle and to run to earth the secret of the unseen hands.

The middle of the afternoon saw me, with my gun on my shoulder, threading the fields in the direction of the farm of Cyrus Cobb. The day was perfect, clear and warm, vibrant with the vital essences of spring. But to me the very tranquility of the afternoon seemed to hold a sinister meaning, the warm sunshine to be charged with menace. As I came in sight of the fringe of nodding sunflowers, the terror of things unaccountable built an iceberg around my heart.

To relieve my depression I started to whistle a lively tune, but the sound died on my lips. I could not whistle. Bolstering my courage with a sickly grin, I crossed the devil's lane and slipped stealthily through the jungle of sunflowers.

The same plow and team were at work as on the day previous.

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The patch of unturned earth was almost gone now. Driverless still, the six horses were making the difficult turns in perfect order and with admirable dispatch.

A rod behind the plow followed a shepherd dog, walking lazily in the furrow, his head and tail down. Suddenly he pricked up his ears and the next moment was off across the freshly turned earth. The attraction, a cotton-tail rabbit, was quickly overhauled. Seizing him by the back, the dog shook him violently until he ceased to struggle. Wagging his tail as if in anticipation of the praise of a master, the dog bore his prize back to the plow, and — even now I could hardly believe my eyes — I saw the rabbit detach itself from the jaws of the dog and drop into the plow-box!

A few minutes later I watched the turning of the last furrow and the unhitching of the team. The horses simply halted, the state-chains dropped from the double-trees, then the team moved on toward the farm buildings in the distance.

I resolved to get closer to those farm buildings myself. They were a half mile distant. Immediately to their left I observed a straggling grove of trees. This was my chance.

Following the fence until the grove was between myself and the collection of buildings, I crept through a field of ripening grain to the shelter of the trees. Even here I took no chances, but glided from one trunk to another until I found myself close upon a corral.

The corral was full of cows, gathered, I rightly divined, for the evening milking. Of a sudden my shifting glance became fixed and my knees wobbled under me. Suspended in the air beneath the bulging udder of a bossy I saw an ordinary milk-pail, while tilted at a familiar angle on the ground beside her right hind leg was a milking-stool. Into the pail the white fluid was streaming in geyser-like jets. I watched the operation, fascinated. More and more meager became the squirts of milk. At last they ceased. I saw the pail withdrawn and the stool topple over. Picking its way among the cows, the pail floated through a little gate — which opened and shut for it — and, tipping, poured its contents into a large can which stood on a near-by table. The pail, swinging in buoyant emptiness, returned to the corral. It hesitated above the stool and the latter leaped up in the air beside it.

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Pail and stool together then singled out a second cow and proceeded to milk her as they had milked her neighbor.

I stole along the border of the wood, but stopped with thundering pulses. In the shade of a tree a middle-aged woman reclined in an easy chair, peacefully finishing an afternoon nap. Here at last was flesh and blood, I thought. But, as I looked, a fan waved slowly backward and forward before the sleeping face!

Presently the woman awoke, rose and moved toward the house. Behind her followed chair and fan, floating through the air at her back.

Lurking at the edge of the wood, I watched the completion of the evening chores. A sack of wheat cleanings emerged from a granary, floated through the air to the chicken yard, where it tipped its ears downward and spilled its contents over the ground. Leaving the greedy fowls to cluck and cackle over their supper, the empty sack hung itself on a near-by fence. More sacks emerged from the granary door and were wafted to the hog lot, where they dumped themselves in troughs and over the backs of the struggling, squealing porkers. Joining the procession, a large can of skimmed milk also poured its contents into the troughs.

The corral gate swung open and the cows filed into the pasture. The hand pump creaked merrily and the troughs filled with water. The stable door opened, and horses, following their tugging halter ropes, went to water and back again. A hay-wagon came in from the field, the chains dropped from the double-trees, the neck-yoke thudded to the ground, and the team disappeared inside the barn. An ax swung lustily at the woodpile and armfuls of wood floated through the air and into the house.

As twilight laid its melancholy shroud upon the farm, I smelled the odor of cooking food and, with both barrels of my gun cocked and ready for I knew not what, I crept stealthily toward the house.

Through a garden gate I glided, along an arbor walk and up to the side of the silent walls. Beneath an open window I halted and, as I raised my eyes above the sash, I heard voices.

"Yes, I've promised the hands a night off," a masculine voice was saying, in a high-pitched, nasal drawl. "They've been beg-

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ging for it for a long time, and, as they've been mighty faithful, I just thought I'd give it to them."

That voice! I had heard it before, sometime, somewhere. The hands! I'd just like to get a look at some of those hands.

I peeped through the window. The room was dark, but a light streamed through an open door on its opposite side. Evidently the speaker was in the farther room. I could see no one, but in a moment a dish floated across the open doorway. The Cobbs were at supper.

Shifting my position to another window, I found that I could command a better view of the second room. Seated at a table, in the act of transferring a forkful of food to his mouth, I beheld the figure of a man. The face was devoid of hair, thin, gaunt and aquiline. The lips were compressed, the eyebrows absent, the skull hidden by a profusion of curly black hair, strangely inconsistent with the rest of the make-up. As the man lifted his voice a second time all doubt was dispelled. Cyrus Cobb was my old acquaintance, Hiram Canby!

A noise at the gate caused me to turn hastily. Gliding along the arbor walk came a white shadow. Its size, shape and density I could not guess in that moment of awful horror. As I feebly fumbled at the triggers of my gun a huge club was brandished above my head. I tried to dodge, I tried to cry out, but the thing struck me a crushing blow and I felt myself drowning in a sea of inky blackness.

When I regained consciousness I was lying between the white sheets of a soft bed. It was day, and my first sensations were a throbbing of the head and a faintness at the stomach. I sat up, wonderingly, and as I did so I heard a door open at my back.

"Pulling yourself together, eh?" drawled a high-pitched, nasal voice. "I thought 'twas about time."

Turning my head, I looked into the deep-set eyes of Hiram Canby. He was holding out a hand.

"Spying on me, eh?" he continued, pleasantly, as I took the bony member. "I s'pose now you'll be writing me up in the papers."

I grinned sheepishly.

"Well, I won't mind it, now the scheme's proved a success,"

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he said, easily, drawing up a chair and motioning me to stay where I was; "but, young fellow, if you hadn't done me a good turn once it 'ud been all off with you last night. Okey was just about to finish you when he recognized your face and called me out."

"Okey?" I interrogated, with a puzzled frown, raising a hand to my bruised head.

"Oklahoma Jones, my foreman — you remember him back in Harney," reminded Canby.

"Sure I remember him," I jerked out, "but your foreman — I don't understand. You don't mean to tell me that you're working this ranch with the shades of the departed?"

"You've hit it," cackled Canby, gleefully slapping a lanky knee, "though I wouldn't have told you if I hadn't thought you'd already guessed it. This is the original ghost ranch, the first and only farm of the unseen hands. When it comes to turning out profits on the investment, flesh and blood at thirty dollars a month isn't in it for a minute, while improved machinery is skinned a thousand miles. Nothing for wages; nothing for clothes; nothing for grub; nothing for ——"

"But how did you do it?" I broke in, breathlessly. In heaven's name how did you ever come to do it?"

"I was just telling you," explained Canby. "I was just going to say that I reasoned it all out back there in Harney eight or nine years ago. If a man can make spirits rap on the walls, pack messages back and forth, tip tables and otherwise juggle with the furniture, as well as trounce disturbers of a seance, what's the matter with having them perform labor of a useful sort? What's the good of letting all that energy go to waste? What's the matter with making them use their muscles on our bread and butter problem? That's the way I figured it out. Logical? Of course it is. Anybody can see it, but somehow nobody else had thought of the scheme. Well, sir, the minute the idea hit me between the eyes I began rounding up a bunch of able-bodied spirits. I told myself that it was the one way for us mediums to prove beyond any doubt that the spirit calling business is no fake. Then I hunted for a ranch where I wouldn't be bothered with meddlers. I'd rather have tried the experiment in a factory,

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because I'm something of a mechanical genius myself, but I was afraid of being put in an asylum or stoned by a mob. People are still frightfully superstitious, you know."

"And the plan worked?" I gasped.

"You bet it worked," beamed Canby. "I tell you there's nothing like it. It's like getting money from home. It's like taking candy from a baby. It's like hiking back to the garden of Eden. And the beauty of it is that you can apply it to any industry. I predict that in five years my system of ghost labor will have revolutionized the world. The mines, the shops, the factories, the railroads and the stores will all be operated by spirits for the benefit of men. We'll have ghost engineers and firemen, ghost ticket punchers, ghost chauffeurs for our automobiles and ghost laborers to build the smoothest boulevards you ever dreamed of. We'll have ghost laundrymen and scrubwomen, ghost cooks and waiters; we'll even have ghost nursemaids to wheel our baby carriages for us. We'll have ghost clerks in the stores, and mighty attentive they will be, too, and ghost brick-layers and builders, and there won't be any labor unions to object, because toil for men will have been abolished and every last jack of us will be a bloated aristocrat. Yes, I alone can call enough spirits from the other sphere to do the work of the world."

"But, Mr. Canby," I objected, "aren't the ghosts themselves likely to organize a union and go on strike?"

"Not at all. There's nothing they like better than work."

"But are your ghost workmen always satisfied?" I probed, remembering Canby's words to his wife as I listened at the window. "Don't they ever ask any favors?"

"Well," confessed Canby, "there's one thing that has given me a little annoyance. They do love an old-fashioned ha'nt, and they've been pestering me to let them take one. In the past I've not allowed them to go off the place, and they've had to be content to do their dances around the rabbit holes in the pasture. But now I've promised them a night off for a good old ha'nt of Jim Simpkins, who's been letting his hogs run on my barley. Jim Simpkins will be scared some — Ha! ha! Just wait a couple o' days. That ghost dance will be the talk of the country."

"But isn't that ha'nting mania itself likely to interfere with

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the general application of your system? Won't the people be prejudiced against spirits with such tastes and refuse to have anything to do with them?"

"The people will become educated," replied Canby. "As soon as they get over their superstitious terror of the departed brothers they won't mind the ha'nts one bit, and as soon as they don't mind, then the spirits won't care to indulge, as the fun with them all comes in scaring the other fellow. Oh, you can't find any flaw in the scheme, young man. It's going to save society, and don't you forget it. Don't you forget, either, that the honor and glory will belong to Hiram Canby, who buried his genius for thirty years within the four walls of an Old Curiosity Shop."

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The Art of Vengeance.*

BY FREDERICK FERDINAND MOORE.

MATIAS could see the soldiers building the gallows. He, Matias Bunagan, heretofore an honest rice cutter of El Poro and a peaceable subject of the great American President of the Philippines, and willing to pay his taxes to the crown of the United States, must be hanged.

Matias understood everything fully. He had killed Pascual de la Cruz. It was the result of an old family feud, which had started long before the Americans had come to the Philippines. In fact, the feud was so old that Matias could not remember what it was about, except that the Bunagan family had sworn by the Blessed Virgin to kill all the members of the de la Cruz family in the province of Cavité, and that was all he cared to know.

The Americans could not understand it. He had been right in killing Pascual; it was as much his duty to kill Pascual as to pay his land tax and cut rice. But the Americans were going to hang Matias to-morrow, and through the walls of his *nipa* prison, he could see the soldiers driving the nails and cutting the beams.

He squatted on the ground and smoked and listened to the music of the hammer. The children were playing in the plaza, and he could hear the chatter of the women in the market and the hum of the Chinese tailor's sewing machine in the *barrio*. The leaves of the palm trees were swinging in the breeze like the arms of so many windmills — swaying as Matias would sway in the breeze to-morrow afternoon, with the black cap over his head and the Manila rope around his neck, and his legs and arms bound fast. He had seen Filipinos hanged himself. The natives came from miles around to see an execution, and he knew how it would be with him.

He could see the priest walking with him from the prison, and

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the sea of curious faces all about — women with naked babies at their breasts, and frightened little girls saying their rosaries, and the file of soldiers keeping back the crowd. He saw himself going up the dozen steps which the soldiers were fitting, heard the prayer of the priest on the platform, saw the hangman tie the knot, caught a glimpse of the black box on the ground below — the black cap jammed over his eyes — the click of the trap and then the plunge into space at the end of the rope — *Madre de Dios !*

Matias brushed away the cold drops which formed on his forehead as he pictured his death the next day. It was terrible, but it could not be helped. He had killed Pascual, and his friends and neighbors would want to see him die bravely, so he resolved to climb the gallows with a cigarette in his mouth and a sneer on his lips for the Americans who hanged a man for killing when he had sworn to do it in a blood feud.

He sat and smoked through the afternoon and reviewed his life. He saw the sun go down behind the mountains of Manila Bay, and knew he would never see that sunset again. Well, he had killed Pascual, and there was some satisfaction in that.

Since his trial, Juan de la Cruz, the brother of Pascual, had come from Manila. He hated Juan and Juan hated him. He knew Juan would be there at noon to-morrow to see him mount the gallows and die, and the knowledge added much bitterness to his position.

"That dog of a dog will stand near the gallows," thought Matias, "and laugh in my face as I go by, with irons on my hands and legs. If I can, I will spit in his eye," and much comforted by the plan, he rolled another cigarette and stolidly watched the soldiers test the new rope by dropping a sack of grain from the beam, with the sack at the end where Matias would be at noon to-morrow.

They brought him boiled rice, and at dark put the death watch over him. The sentry paced outside the guard house, and Matias could see him through the basket-like wall of the prison.

Sleep? No, he would not sleep, for there were but a few hours of life left to him, and he would smoke through the night. Pray? Why should he pray? He had sworn to kill Pascual, and God would not blame him for killing, no matter what the padre or the Americans said. He would die without sleeping or praying,

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and he would show the people of El Poro how a Bunagan could die.

It was very dark now, and all he could see was the tip of his cigarette when it flared up as he puffed it. He could hear the sentry pacing outside, and after a while he heard a bugle blowing, and the wind swishing through the palm trees, but he was going to die at noon to-morrow and did not care what happened.

What was that? Did he hear something rustle outside the bamboo wall? It was a strange noise, and the sentry heard it, for he stopped his pacing for a minute. It must have been a snake or a tree toad.

The sentry resumed his monotonous walk and Matias puffed his cigarette.

There it was again! It was almost at his feet and just outside the split bamboo wall. It was a boring sound, and it came when the sentry was at the farther end of his beat. He put his hand on the wall and felt it tremble. What could it be?

It stopped as the sentry came past again. Then the stealthy sound began again when the sentry was at the other end of the guard house.

"Matias," came a gentle whisper.

"Yes," hissed Matias, quivering with excitement.

"Here is a bolo — meet me at the dead palm tree in the barrio — be careful — you have a long time to cut out — I will be waiting."

By all the Holy Saints! Who could it be that was bringing the much desired bolo? Who was bringing him sweet life? With a sharp bolo he could cut his way to freedom easily.

Matias felt along the wall cautiously and his hand encountered the hilt of a great bolo, thrust through a hole in the wall. Inch by inch he drew it inward, and the blade cut its way through the bamboo strips noiselessly.

Sometimes he took ten minutes to cut through a strip of bamboo the size of his finger. When a dog barked he gained a couple of inches — when "Taps" sounded he cut a slit a foot long in the wall. In an hour his little door was complete, and when the sentry went around the guard house he crawled through and slipped away in the darkness.

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Queen of Angels ! It was good to be free again. And here he was, under the very gallows which had been built for him. He stopped to curse the timbers and the Americans, spat on the steps, and then stole through the palm grove to meet his unknown friend at the dead palm.

"Is that you, Matias?"

"Yes. Who is my saviour? Forever I am your slave."

"Come," said the unknown, "Follow me. They will miss you in a few minutes when the watch is changed, and you must hide."

Matias followed on in the darkness, afraid that it was all a dream and that he would wake up to hear the guard calling him to make ready for death.

On through the jungle they went, toward the hills, and Matias knew his rescuer was taking him to a cave somewhere in the great cañon, where he could hide until an opportunity presented itself to escape to Manila.

Soon he heard the sound of dripping water and he was guided into a small cave, and he could feel the damp and slimy walls of rock.

"Now," said the stranger, "Give me the bolo, for I must go back through the jungle and I need a weapon. Lie here until I come in the morning with food. Don't stir outside or make a noise, for the soldiers will be seeking for you everywhere, and if I am long in coming do not fear, for we must be cautious. Good bye."

"Who are you?" asked Matias.

"You must not know until you are safe — I am a good friend — fear not."

"May God bless you," said Matias, and he kissed the hand of the stranger. "Ten thousand blessings on your head and I am your slave for life."

The unknown glided away, and Matias heard him roll a stone in the entrance of the cave and then all was still, except the incessant dripping of the water. It was better than the guard house, he thought, with the sentry pacing outside and the dreadful gallows with the rope swinging from the beam, in the prison yard. He rolled a cigarette and smoked, and sat on his heels.

All night he stared into the blackness, burning his hand at

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times with the fire of his cigarette when he found himself wondering if it were a dream. Finally, the light filtered through the crevices, and then a tiny sunbeam crept in through the entrance of the cave, but he did not move from the place where he had sat all night.

After a long time he heard some one at the stone and a form came in, and after his eyes had become accustomed to the light he saw a well-dressed native standing over him with a bolo.

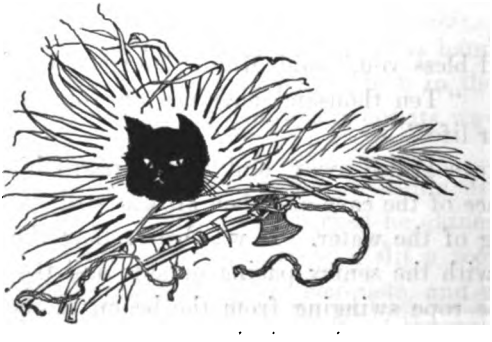
"Juan de la Cruz!" he cried, drawing back in terror.

"Yes — Juan de la Cruz. The brother of Pascual, whom you killed. It was I who helped you to escape last night."

"The feud!" groaned Matias, "You have come to kill me! You dog, you took me from prison to bolo me here. Why did you not let them hang me? I would rather be hanged a thousand times by the hated Americans than to die by your hand."

"I have not come to kill you," said the other. "That was my plan last night, for a de la Cruz must have his vengeance. But the American colonel has offered five hundred *pesos* for your capture. Five hundred *pesos* will buy many masses for the soul of my brother. The Americans will hang you, and I will have no blood on my hands. Come — the hangman is waiting."

He led Matias back to the village. The soldiers put the irons on his hands and he saw the blood money paid to Juan. He saw the rope swinging in the breeze. The priest prayed. He stepped on the trap and swung into eternity.



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The Goddess of the Sea.*

BY ROSE MILLS POWERS.

RINE-ENCRUSTED old ruin as she was, the Goddess of the Sea retained a certain dignity that her abandonment by priest and worshipper alike could not destroy. There was something commanding about the outlines of the old temple that made it believable that she had served as fortress as well as shrine. Loopholes in her porcelain façade and her battlemented walls attested to the popular tradition that she had been one of the city's outlying strongholds in the days of cross-bow warfare.

In faded scarlet and tarnished gilt, the life size, clay image of the goddess looked placidly from her shrine in the central hall, her attendant divinities, Favorable Wind Ear and Thousand Mile Eye, beloved of sailors and junk men, leaning toward her in worshipful postures.

Since the days of her royal patroness, one of the early empresses of the Ming era, the goddess had gazed, faintly smiling, on many changing scenes in her lacquered halls. The magnificence of satin-clad emperors had trailed itself before her eyes; the cotton-clad simplicity of sea-faring folk had prostrated itself at her feet, — there had been bloody warfare at her very doors and the shrieks of the wounded and dying had echoed through her corridors — but surely unique was the scene upon which she now looked — a tow-headed American lad clambering into her sacred lap and poking behind her honorable back with a long stick. From the stone step at the feet of the goddess, sacred to incense and joss-stick burning since time immemorial, a little girl, pink-cheeked and tearful, raised a despairing face to the young vandal.

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"No use, Constance," the boy announced after several vigorous thrusts, "Your doll is not here. Whew! what a dust! Let's get out into the courtyard and you can tell me over again how you came to lose her."

The Temple courtyard, shady with fragrant plum and oleander, and swept by sea breezes, was the favorite rallying spot for excursions with the little foreign community in the gray old Chinese city. As the children entered the square, a flock of pigeons feasting on stray remnants from a recent picnic arose with a sweep into the air and vanished in the red eaves of the building.

Between her sobs, Constance restated the events that had led up to the loss of her doll: With the other children of the picnic party, she had been playing hide and seek and had climbed to hide behind the idol. Tiffin had been called just then and she laid her doll for safe keeping in the wide comfortable looking lap of the goddess, intending to return for her after the meal, but had forgotten all about her until some hours later. The narrative ended with a storm of sobs, the boy trying in a clumsy way to quiet his sister, but to no avail. Suddenly Constance looked up with brightening eyes.

"Oh, David, I forgot; old Wu was looking in at the door when I climbed down from the idol, perhaps he knows something about my doll."

"Who do you mean?" asked the boy.

"Why, you know, old Wu who lives in the little house at the Temple gate and makes the paper toys and mock money to be burned at the graves."

David's eyes opened wide. Here was a clue.

"We'll go and ask him," he said, jumping to his feet. "Cheer up, we'll find Lady Laura yet."

They descended the long flight of steps to the gate to find the little outbuilding occupied by Wu shut up and bolted.

"He's probably gone to carry a load of his things to some funeral," said Constance. "He had a lot of paper animals and clothes stacked up outside the door when we came this morning."

David was staring past the sorghum fields toward the west, where the city wall ran its castellated outline against the horizon. A faint wailing accompanied by the clang of cymbals rose on the

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air, and the gleam of embroidered trappings threw into relief a long line of white-robed figures. A funeral was in progress in one of the ancestral burying grounds adjoining the city wall. The children, moved by a common impulse, ran toward the scene.

Wu, the image and offering-maker of Sin Chow, was something of an artist in his line. When failing strength made him quit his profession of following the mast, he had taken up this trade and had been so successful that he was known as "Wu of the inspired thumb." No one could equal his deftness of touch in making the various offerings wrought of clay, bamboo and paper burned by mourning relatives at the graves of deceased friends. There was also a touch of sentiment about the old sailor, as his occupation of the hovel near the temple proved, and it was rumored that he daily worshipped at the shrine of the abandoned Goddess of the Sea.

When Li Fan Yin, who was one of the minor mandarins and a person of some official importance in Sin Chow, had come to him with a large order for funeral offerings for his deceased wife, among other things asked for (be it confessed, somewhat shamefacedly by that worthy gentleman), had been a representation of a "foreign devil." Mrs. Li had become acquainted with one of the woman missionaries and during her last illness had taken a strange fancy to having this foreign person visit her — abnormal, no doubt, the graduate explained, tapping his head significantly — but as it was her last illness, he had agreed to the odd whim she had expressed, to have an image of the foreigner in the retinue accompanying her to the spirit world. Could Wu undertake such a commission?

Wu, with much servile prostrating, owing to the somewhat exalted rank of his customer, assured him of his ability to execute any order his honorable highness might be pleased to ask of his worthless servant, and the bargain was concluded.

The image-maker spent several days working at Li's order and, on the day of the funeral, it was with great satisfaction that he unloaded his stock of offerings at the grave of Mrs. Li. There was a glint of excitement in his eye that betokened something out of the ordinary in what he had to show.

The ceremony of the burial had proceeded to the point where

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the local divinities were being placated by offerings of meat, wine and mock money. Now the wailings of the mourners were redoubled as the little sedan chair, with the picture of Mrs. Li inside, was brought forward from Wu's pack. Around it were grouped representations of animals, mock jewelry and bunches of gilt and silver paper money. Then the officiating priest, with an explanatory remark about the curious whim of the late Mrs. Li, held up the image of the "foreign devil" lady who was to go as an attendant to the deceased. The crowd pressed nearer to gaze at this offering and a "Hi yah" of admiration smote the ears of Wu where he stood, outwardly nonchalant but inwardly exultant as he noticed Li Fan Yin's satisfaction in the amount of "face" he was creating in the burial of Mrs. Li. "That means three, perhaps five, extra strings of cash," the offering-maker calculated to himself.

As the priest held Wu's masterpiece upraised, a cry arose on the outskirts of the crowd and it parted as two breathless foreign children forced their way past the mourners into the circle around the open grave.

"Oh, my dolly! Give me my dolly!" cried Constance, as she saw her beloved Lady Laura in the priest's hands. Then, noticing the fire of smoldering charcoal which was waiting for the offerings, and realizing what was about to happen, she began shrieking hysterically with hands outstretched to her lost treasure.

David, with cooler head, began to offer an explanation to the company, which, till now, had stood still from sheer astonishment at the turn affairs had taken.

The faultless Chinese of his eloquent appeal for justice, and his denunciation of the thieving Wu, who slunk in the background as attention was drawn to him, won some sympathy for the children, but Li Fan Yin's brow contracted as he saw the effect of David's tale and, fearing he might "lose face" if the doll were given up, he hurriedly seized the boy by the arm and started to eject him from the place. As David resisted, the sudden rage which sometimes possesses the Chinaman came upon Li, and, forgetting the dignity of his position in the anger that consumed him, he began to shriek a tirade of verbal abuse at the American lad.

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Shaking himself free from the half-crazed Chinaman, David faced him with flashing eyes. Not for naught came he from a line of ancestors of the Church and State militant. The blood of fearless Pilgrims and staunch minute men ran in his veins, and he was ready to fight to the death for his principles. Lad as he was, he had not lived in China fourteen years in vain, and his subconscious self, which had been absorbing impressions through all his young life, came to his rescue. In his comings and goings, many a forensic contest had he witnessed, many a wordy duel in market place and country road, and, without the slightest effort, he found himself giving the irate official a roland for every oliver, with this difference, that, whereas Li had descended to street lingo, the retort courteous as given by David was couched in classic Confucian diction.

The Chinaman, beaten at his own game, and red in the face and breathless from his verbal onslaught, was soon glad to snatch the doll from the priest's hand and restore it to its rightful owner. Immediately, as if nothing had happened, the funeral ceremonies were renewed, and the persistent wail of the mourners again rent the air. The incident was closed.

As the children dodged around the tombs to reach the open fields adjoining the mission compound, they saw Wu disappearing in the direction of the temple — a slinking, dejected figure outlined against the red sunset sky.

The next picnic party found an empty room at the temple gate. Wu lodged there no more. They also found the Goddess of the Sea decapitated, her head with faintly smiling lips lying on her folded hands. The foreigners were puzzled by this act of vandalism, but no Chinamen to whom they appealed could explain it and their apathetic shrugs showed the slight impression made upon them by the occurrence.

But an offering-maker who earns an indifferent living in an interior city, some hundred miles away, sometimes scowls over his work as he mutters to himself:

"Did I not carry daily offerings to her shrine? Did I not make three kneelings and nine knockings at her feet, night and morning? Did she not herself give me what my hands could not fashion, causing the little foreign devil to leave it in her lap

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for me to take? Ah, base and ungrateful goddess, to so trick me in the end, causing me to forever lose face in Sin Chow! But these hands, Hi Yah! they wrought a rapid vengeance!"

And, as the recreant Wu looks reminiscently at his skinny, long nailed fingers — far away the decapitated Goddess of the Sea, in her forsaken shrine, faintly smiles.

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The White Handkerchief.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

IT hung between a portrait of Kruger and a rough pencil drawing of a skirmish at Paardeburg. Deschard stared at it, and wondered. A square of linen, slightly soiled, was to him an unusual wall decoration. Yet, something must have made it precious. Perhaps it had done duty as a flag of truce; perhaps, in those fierce days when each side forgot the laws of warfare, it had lured an unsuspecting foeman to his death.

The Vrouw with the deep-set brown eyes, watched the visitor as he drank the cool well water. Presently she spoke:

"You are wondering about that," she said, pointing to the frame containing the piece of linen. "We call it 'Piet's Handkerchief.'"

Deschard blushed. "I was wondering," he stammered. "Yes —I was."

The woman with the wrinkled face laughed softly.

"You have heard of him, Piet Van Reick?" she questioned. "Ah, I thought you would have heard. I am his mother."

Over her face there came a sweet look of conscious pride that softened and beautified it. Deschard bowed, and mentally recorded the fact that there is no soulfilling pride like that felt by the woman who has mothered a hero.

"You know of his work," she cried. "Ah, we will never forget! While the veldt spreads pure and wholesome under the eye of God we will remember. Why shouldn't we? Souls grow big that live on memories.

"See the little kopje to the right? Nine men lie buried there. A score of them, out hunting Cronje, rode down here one summer afternoon. Three hours afterwards, when the live eleven with

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their cursing officer rushed the house, they found me alone. They had sense enough to know that I couldn't bring a man down at eight hundred yards. Piet had crept past the angry fools, and he was riding fast to Swartz Nek while they were questioning his mother. *Gott im Hemel!* I mothered a man!"

Deschard's nerves tingled as he contemplated the narrator.

"It is too long to tell it all," she continued. "Perhaps you know much of it, and the story would be old news. The Lieutenant Hollingworth business? Ah, you know! My Piet! My Piet! Fifteen men, and he sent them back naked to their commander! Sent them back as bare as the Red Plain when the water dries at Schneider's Ford. Will those fifteen ever forget, think you?"

She rose from her chair and stood upright. Memory lit a fire within her soul that made the old eyes blaze.

"He was a brother to De Wet. He sat with Cronje, my Piet! They spoke of him at Capetown, and ten thousand women prayed the good God to spare him to our side. Could a mother ask for more?

"Then that last — you know of that, too? Who doesn't? Our children sing of it. The winds, rolling softly over the sweet veldt, tell of it. Oh, yes, it was against the rules of war. The rules of war! The fools! There are no rules of war when one's women folk and children crouch in dread when the Mauser bullet sings a deathsong! There are no rules of war when the women kneel near the burning farms so that God can see as well as hear them! Men — men like my Piet — smash all rules at times like those. Has the tiger any rules when the lion springs upon the home of his cubs?

"They shot him at dawn with the sun peeping up over the veldt. I do not cry. I am proud. There are women who put his name in their prayers before the names of their dead husbands. Why should I weep?

"The little captain, a jackanapes in khaki, handed him that — that handkerchief.

"'Bind your eyes,' he said.

"He said that to Piet. To my Piet! The little fool! Piet took the cloth and flung it in the captain's face.

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"'I can look six men in the face, you coward,' he cried. 'Bind your own red eyes, lest it will be too much for your little heart to see a man die.'

"And Piet laughed, and while he laughed they shot him. My Piet. Yes, I mothered a man."

She sat back in the wooden chair, and after a time Deschard rose. He put out his hand to say good-bye, but she didn't notice it. The deep-set eyes were studying the tablets of Memory where Love had written the deeds of a hero.

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Shenagolden's Magic.*

BY FLORENCE SEYLER THOMPSON.

ROM the West to the Sea, following the running races, had come Shenagolden, sometime of Kilmallock, on a pilgrimage of hate, and, as the miles grew less between him and Rodney Hughes, he felt physical satisfaction in letting his rage riot uncurbed in his heart. For many years, for many reasons, his anger had burned low, perforce, lest he himself be consumed. Out of work and discredited, because of the lie that had nearly broken his heart, he was kept from being a murderer only because his enemy had gone where he had no money to pursue. When the water no longer separated him from Hughes, it was months before he located his old employer, the trail leading to the Golden Gate, back to Memphis, down to New Orleans, up to the Chicago Derby, and now, bound Eastward, beckoned by the name he hated printed in a Turf journal, his revenge seemed in sight.

That Hughes was not racing his string under his own name, Shenagolden did not at first know, but when he learned that Black Death, a famous runner that had already in his brief career killed two grooms and maimed a jockey for life, was really owned by Hughes, and was entered for the Great Event — the Six-Furlongs Sweepstakes at Sheepshead — his mind was made up. Now the iron monster ahead of him was biting off the miles that still separated him from his vengeance, and as he leaned back in the car seat and closed his eyes to ease the tension of his brain, he felt a certain pride in his tenacity of purpose. He had known that he could hate hard, but not that he could hate so hard and so long.

Even before he had crossed from Kilmallock to England, to

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work among the horses he loved, young Terence had sometimes been seen by his intimates to grow suddenly white and pinched around the nostrils, while his eyes narrowed to slits in his excessive anger, but who could stand long in mortal terror of a boy with one brown, burning eye, when the other eye was Irish blue? Terence Shenagolden fancied his peculiarity the brand of Cain, but others who loved more than feared would not have had his two eyes alike — he would not have been Terence.

Could he help it that his heart so softened at the sight of a pretty face, when some gray-orbed, black-lashed colleen shot the splendid glory of her eyes full upon him, that a slow and reluctant smile stole over his lips, and a sweet, low whistle, that never came straight, issued from one corner of his mouth? One did not dislike Shenagolden for these things, but came nearest to it when running athwart his will — for he would have his own way — he loved authority, and dominion came to be as the breath of his nostrils.

One very wonderful gift he had, by which he had become known in every stable in England, and the notoriety had followed him to America. It was this magic of his, indeed, when exercised in public for the first time, that had brought about the breach with Hughes, who had accused him of drugging the horse upon which he had exercised his power. The animal had lain in stupor for a while, Hughes and his friends lost their money, and Terence was disgraced. He could have borne it all, and begged to be kept on in the most menial service, had not Hughes told that lie, and declared that the horse was doped!

Now he knew just what he would do. He would face Hughes, a pistol in his pocket, even on the race track, and shoot him straight between the eyes. And after that? He did not care. That had always been the climax of his dreams. He knew just what he would say, even though his voice reverted to the old familiar brogue and lost, in its rage, the mellow richness of a silver bell, from vocal chords strung like the harp of Tara.

With a purpose so grim, he was naturally not anxious to foregather with the grooms and idlers about the stables nor the touts about the track, and so it was with swift dismay that he saw, almost as soon as he was within the big gates, a jockey whom he

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had known, and who, in fact, had been present on that humiliating occasion so long ago in England. "Slim Jim" Lind recognized him at once, but gave no hint of remembrance of that which Terence cherished the more the fiercer it hurt.

Lind, he knew, must be riding for Hughes, and he kept his ears open for all the gossip of the track, and it was with strange emotions that he drank in the significantly whispered words:

"Hughes is playing for more than the big stake this time — it's for life itself," said one. . . . "What yer givin' us?" snorted another, "yer know he's barred from the turf!" . . . "That doesn't prevent his putting his string in another name, smarty! He's had a horse in every race of any account since that crooked deal of his at New Orleans!"

"He's gone to pieces along with Black Death," the first man resumed. "It's nothing but the horse's bad temper that ails him, and it's his black soul that ails Hughes. He's on his last legs, and nobody but one specialist over in Europe can save him. His whole string's sold now, but the black, that's entered for the big purse this afternoon — and you can't trust that horse more'n you could the devil!"

"Surest thing you know," assented the other. "Why, I remember one time, when Death had lost a race, Hughes shook his fist under his nose, and foamin' at the mouth, yelled, 'And I paid $22,000 to pick that live coal out of hell!'"

The knowing one nodded, and continued: "The horse is entered in the name of his new wife, who doesn't know the first thing about the turf. She's dead stuck on Hughes, though nobody else, who's on to him, will trust or help him. 'Slim Jim's' straight, and will never throw a race — but the black may throw him! It's a good thing for Hughes' weak heart that he's not here to see the finish!"

Shenagolden turned away, furies raging in his heart. Thwarted again, when every nerve tingled with the longing to kill!

It was a long time before his violent anger was succeeded by a calm hardly less demoniac, for he caught a glimpse of the once famous and still magnificent racer, Black Death, and a sure instinct whispered that the black beast had in his eye a look that boded ill, and that the great race was lost before it was yet run.

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Hughes had made his reputation and vanity suffer! Now, his own life was at stake, and forfeited!

Shenagolden was aroused from his reverie by the surging of the monster crowd, that spread along down the track, behind the fence, spilling over the grand stand — the occupants of carriages and touring cars adding a riot of color and noise to the animated scene. Again he saw the little one-hundred-and-five-pound jockey, Lind, flirting his whip in recognition to some one in the grand stand, and, following his glance, Shenagolden beheld a girlish looking figure and an eager but worried face. A second look took in the added details of a black gown and a small black toque trimmed with gold-colored satin, over which trailed a bright green feather.

A sudden lull in the laughter and the hubbub, a tremulous quiver of excitement, and then a perfect babel of sound announced that the starters in the first race were off. Shenagolden picked his winner in one of the tail-enders, for he himself had always been fond of getting away slowly. Ah, but that was a terrific burst of speed! His choice was still behind at the half, neck and neck at the stretch — now for a spurt! He felt the blood beating in his neck! There! The despised tail-ender went to the leaders with a rush, rounded the far turn and drew away into an easy lead in the last furlong!

This was life indeed to the former jockey! Through three or more events he sat, every nerve tense and tingling. Then he strolled over to the paddock. The next but one on the card was the Great Event of the day, and a nervous thrill pervaded the vast throng. The bookies and the talent had their hands full. Tremendous odds were offered and taken, for Black Death's unreliability was known to all. Shenagolden listened to the betting and the gossip with a fierce joy, and then he caught his breath as he came in sight of the famous runner himself, with Lind, his mount, in conference with the lady of the green feather. Her face was pale, and her hands were clasped and her eyes fixed upon the horse.

"Surely not," he muttered to himself. "She cannot be the wife of Hughes — and yet — !"

The three gazed at the black horse, whose hue was not a gleaming, glossy black, but a bluish duskiness, wonderful to behold.

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His nostrils seemed to glow, either with hot blood or devil's fire. Shenagolden stole another look at the anxious face under the green feather. His hot anger, nursed through long years of waiting for vengeance still burned as he gazed again at the danger signal flaunting in the whites of the big horse's eyes.

Then the inevitable happened. Just as the horses came under the wire in the race before his own, Black Death began a dance, led by the furies raging within him, and all but threw and trampled the stable boy who held his head. Shenagolden could not have explained his complex emotions, as he watched the maddened horse struggling with his trainer, grooms and jockey. He knew that all hope of getting Black Death on to the track was futile — all hope of his winning the big purse gone!

"And I" — he crooned to himself, "I, Shenagolden of Kilmallock, can tame this blue devil! I can give that race to Rodney Hughes — to the black cur who shamed me before all England, on Derby Day!"

Suddenly Jim Lind, catching his gaze, sprang from the knot of perspiring men about the frantic brute, clutched Shenagolden by the arm, and, panting and breathless, exclaimed to the lady:

"Here he is, Eunice! . . . Terence, this is my sister — Hughes' wife! For God's sake help! It's life or death for him!"

Eunice clasped her hands again, convulsively — involuntarily. She tried to speak with dignity, but, torn with emotion, her voice broke as she said:

"They tell me you are a horse-whisperer — that you can do anything with a horse that you want to. Oh, Terence —" She burst into a half sob, and Shenagolden started at the dear old Irish name upon her lips.

"He — Rodney, my husband — calls you that! Have you any other name?" She faltered and crimsoned even in her hurried anguish. "He has said — Oh, often of late — 'That boy Terence could manage Black Death!' He did you wrong one time, I know; he has told me — but there was a reason — it was some money he had bet — Oh, I am ashamed to speak of it!"

Between her excited utterances she caught at her heart.

"But he is so ill now! I *must* win this race for him! Rodney admits — I don't understand, exactly — that you only used your

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power too strongly! Oh, use it once again — for my sake! It seems as if the angels had listened to my prayer!"

She looked at him wistfully, and Lind stood stoically by.

Almost with her first words there had come to Shenagolden a sudden widening of the eyes, as if a curtain had been lifted — and a burden seemed rolled away from his heart.

"I came to kill your husband," he said simply, and in the same moment was turning toward the horse, when a gong sounded and through a megaphone a hoarse voice announced that the Six-Furlong race would be called in just five minutes! Black Death was still in a violent rage!

Like an electrical current, the news of something extraordinary about to happen ran through the crowd, and as the trio approached the horse those nearest had already divined it. "The horse-whisperer — magic worker — fake!" The words were tossed back and forth like rattling dice, and as Shenagolden's sensitive ears caught the last dread word once more his face grew hot.

But his time had come — not in the way he had dreamed and planned — but in a triumph that should be even sweeter! The years rolled back like a scroll and the arrogance of his hot youth came back, and with it the brogue to his tongue. Every bit of boyish vanity leaped to the surface again, and his nerves tingled in ecstasy in that spectacular moment when the eyes of a staring, fascinated multitude were upon him.

A hurried conference between judges and starter had been held. Yes — it was permissible — such things were sometimes done — on the other side. No official notice was taken of Black Death's condition or the sensational remedy proposed, but the raucous voice through the megaphone announced once more the time for the Great Event. Three minutes remained! Black Death would not be scratched or disqualified, but if not lined up among the starters at the send-off, he would simply be left at the post!

Two minutes! Five thousand pairs of eyes had but one objective point — the lithe and nonchalant back of Shenagolden, as he made his way toward the struggling and infuriated horse. The stable-men were exhausted and in mortal terror.

"I cannot fail — I must not —" prayed Shenagolden. If only an excess of power might not undo him again.

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A dead stillness had fallen, and of the vast audience those near enough heard the velvety voice of the horse-whisperer. He was saying something unintelligible, but soft and musical, as he approached the angry beast. Not once did his pace slacken, but straight up, unfalteringly, did he come, and at the first lyric note the animal's quivering ceased, and Black Death stood still.

Shenagolden touched him lightly on the neck, whispered again, and the great horse neighed and lay down. For a moment only, a deadly fear gripped Terence, but it passed as quickly, and then, to the accompaniment of a colossal gasp of horror, he had stretched himself full length upon the panting body of that passive volcano, and impudently, but superbly, lighted a cigarette!

Ten seconds later he had risen, and without a word or glance had strolled away, — and Black Death had followed him to the starting post, as if he were his dog!

The crowd went mad for a moment, in a riot of mingled joy and rage, and as Lind leaped lightly to his seat in the saddle men literally threw money at the bookmakers in their frantic haste to bet, and the insanity of that minute and some brief seconds in which Black Death, a bluish streak of leaping flesh, topped with a blur of green and gold, the colors of the old Hughes stables, won the Six Furlongs in record time, was the most intense ever known in the history of the great classic Event of the East.

The fact that Shenagolden's pilgrimage of hate came to such a peculiar end is perhaps accounted for by that other fact that Terence had one eye that was blue, though the other was brown.

While the big purse of thirty-five thousand dollars added a few months to the life of Rodney Hughes, and gave him a chance to retract his words about the drugging of his horse, which he did right handsomely, too, before he died, the European specialist could only tide him over the winter. And now it seems that sometime the velvet voice of Shenagolden of Kilmallock, with its strings like the harp of Tara, will whisper away the heart of Black Death's mistress.

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Miss Betty.*

BY JUDITH GRAVES WALDO.

WHEN Jedediah was a baby, Lucia, his mother, used to wrap him away in the dried sea grass of the higher beaches while she worked at the torn nets and watched the blue strip of water beyond the Point for the sweep of a home-spread sail. Even when Caleb's boat had just cleared the harbor and her hands still twitched as she tried to weave the threads, her eyes would dream around the spot where she knew the masts would first loom above the dunes on Long Point. Maybe it was in those long waiting months that Jedediah's eyes began to look like his mother's, a misty revery about them, but seeing every dot that flecked the sea. And with the October's coming, when the cranberries were red drops in the brown bogs, Lucia would take him across the strip of land that held the sea from the little town, and while she gleaned the bogs he kept on the upper dunes where he could see the ships standing well out past the bars off Peaked Hills. And once as he watched there, glad, he did not know why, that the wind was strong over him, he saw a man in the high rigging of a ship, a small, dark, swaying thing against the taut white sails.

"Where are you?" Lucia cried out, starting suddenly. And when she turned about he pointed out to sea and laughed down to her:

"I'm in that riggin', reefin' the topsail!"

"You shan't! Never — never!" she cried to herself, as she bent to the gleaning again. But if your baby has slept in the dried sea grass and rolled among the nets and comes at last to watch, always, the ships go up and down and is glad when the wind flies strong, and does not know why, there is no use trying to hold him when his time comes. And Jedediah's time

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came soon enough, for when they came to tell Lucia that Caleb would never come back, she just said: "Yes, I know," and in a few weeks she died and left Jedediah to watch the ships alone. He went across the dunes, past the bogs where his mother had gleaned, and when he came to the sea his eyes saw nothing but a far white sail, no greater than his hand. He watched until it grew big, beating close inshore, and he could hear the scrape of the wind on her canvas.

"She's rigged outward bound, but she's making harbor," he said aloud. "She's coming for me!" And he turned to run all the way to the village to wait by the wharf until the boat came in. But when he asked to ship on her the captain of the whaler looked him over slowly with a careful noting of the lithe, boyish figure, and then a long stare into Jedediah's eyes.

"Can you keep your head and eyes by you?"

"Yes."

"Don't look it!"

"I can."

"Sign in, then. I put in here for another hand. One didn't show up at sailing. Didn't want a boy, but sign in." And Jedediah signed for a two years' cruise.

While the ship beat up the coast toward Davis Strait there was little work to do, and Jedediah could dream and grow solemn in the great new marvel of it all, and then laugh aloud because he was glad, and drag his bed up from below to lie under this new sky and take the swish of the sea and the purr of the wind on the sails into his sleep with him. But when they had entered the straits and the bay was nearing, there was too serious work to be dreaming. There were the long cold days at the masthead that grew suddenly pulsing hot at sight of a spouting whale. Then the great swing of the boat's pull to meet it; the craft and cunning of stealth, and the stifled joy in the danger of fight and capture. Sea-life was a rapturous life to Jedediah, and not even the heavy work, the murk and slime of the hold, the sickening smell of the boiling blubber, or the aching winds of the northern floes could take away the spell of it all that made him glad — glad — he did not know why. And so when the ship swept out from the bay again, flying before the ice that already stiffened the waves

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off the headlands, Jedediah climbed into the foresail and said his farewell to Rowe's Welcome with a promise of return.

The ice had come early that year, or, maybe, the whales were shy, for the ship could not get her full cargo and ran down by the Azores to complete it, and made Amsterdam her market close to the ending of her first year. But Jedediah was afraid of that great strange thing at the end of the quays that was a city, where the sailors rioted at night, and the very children spoke a language he did not know, and he stayed by the ship when the work of the day was over, climbing the rigging to watch the lights that pricked the blackness into life, and to wonder about the people who drifted up and down the quays. And there he was even the last night before the ship dropped down the harbor on her return voyage. The mist was breathing in off the sea and Jedediah was thinking what queer faint trails the lights made in it, when, just below him on the quay, an English voice — a girl's, soft, supple, a little sob in it, — laughed out, dimpling the mist. Jedediah gripped the rope with tingling fingers and crouched to listen, for she was saying something, but he could not hear, and those with her cried out: "Oh, Betty!" and she laughed again, and Jedediah's pulses throbbed. He did not know a voice could hold such sound. It was long after they had passed into the city that Jedediah swung down to stand on the quay just where the girl's laugh had rung up to him.

"Betty," he whispered to the lights of the harbor. "One day I shall have a ship of my own and her name shall be Betty.

"Betty," he said to the wind that was driving the mist away, "Betty."

But it was nearly fifteen years before Jedediah had a boat of his own — the youngest captain in the fleet then. She was a three-master, schooner rigged and painted black. And because just "Betty" seemed too bold for other men to speak, Jedediah called her "Miss Betty," and had the name done in gold — where all the others were in white — and knew for the first time that through the years he had thought of gold hair when he thought of the girl who had laughed on the quays at Amsterdam.

"Miss Betty's" first voyage was into the straits for Arctic whale and Jedediah had not seen the headlands of Rowe's Wel-

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come since his boyhood cruise. She was the last of the fleet to leave the bay that season, and with full cargo was running south again, well down the straits, when, in the lurid dawn, the man braced at the helm saw Jedediah slip from the rigging where he had climbed at midnight on some strange purpose of his own.

He came to stand by the helm, but did not speak for some moments, and when he did his voice was unsteady.

"Bring her — about!"

"What?" the man cried, and the helm slipped a point. They were running before the wind.

"Bring her about!" he said with steady voice. "We go back!"

But the man jammed the helm down and kept to the course, looking furtively about to see if any were near.

"I'm not daffy," said Jedediah, quietly, watching him, "but I've seen that thing that will take her back if she goes with me alone. Will you bring her about, or — " And cowed by Jedediah's eye, the man slowly shoved the helm over till the sails quivered and slacked and then jarred to the shock of the wind, head on, and the men were scrambling on deck with scared faces.

"Get to the ropes!" Jedediah yelled, and every man was in his place. And now she had to beat her way, and it was not until she was rushing free on the backward course that Jedediah called the men to him. His face was white, drawn, stern with big purpose, but over his eyes was the mist of revery that was over Lucia's, and his voice was full:

"Straight above us — maybe nigh Rowe's Welcome — full two days' run — a wreck is pounding on the reefs."

"Who spoke us?" someone cried out.

"No one spoke us!" Jedediah flung wide his arms. "I heard the slatting of her sails an' saw her. Her riggin's strewn across decks — her masts are gone, and men are clinging in the ropes and sails, and the wind off the floes is hard over them!"

The men were huddled together white-lipped. Jedediah crossed to the foremast and turned.

"I'm not daffy, men; bear me out. If we don't find her in two days — three — give me three — the oil is yours, an' your wage — I'll sign it."

A man stirred and held up his hand to let it drop again.

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It was no simple superstition of the sea. Every sailor knew that such things were, and they would not dicker for oil with the man who had been sent the revealing. Jedediah climbed slowly to the masthead, the men crept back to their places, and "Miss Betty" rushed on into the north.

The days were short in the northern waters, and it was in the dimming light of the third noon that the far headlands of Rowe's Welcome showed off the port bow, and almost at the moment of sighting her, Jedediah's voice rang from the masthead. There were no words, just a great cry that cut the wind and brought the men clambering below him.

"Whar away?"

"Keep her off! She's broad on the lee bow," and the men swarmed up the ropes and then clung there agap, for across the sea that heaved and swung and dipped below them, lay a battered wreck, her masts gone, the rigging strewn across her decks and the pounding sea against her. But there was no sign of life over her, and Jedediah's orders came in a voice that lashed and bit them into quick action against the sullen weather. They kept off before the wind and then ran down close to the reefs, and the long boat put out with Jedediah and three men, though everyone had begged to go; and all the way he cautioned them what men became after days without water and food. But when they were close on her, and there was no answer to their shout, two of the men clambered up boldly by some trailing ropes, and then fell back and cried on God with horrid, distorted faces, and crouched by the gunwale, and Jedediah cursed them out of his way and stood up on the deck. And then he moved across it, without looking at what lay there, toward a tangle of sails and ropes, and the two men staring after him, saw a woman creep from the shelter of the sails and lift up her hands to him. She was gaunt with famine, but her eyes were clear and sane, and the great gold of her unbound hair was about her, and when she cried out to him with a little sob in her voice, Jedediah bent down and lifted her. "Betty," he said, "Betty."

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A Break in the Circuit.*

BY XENO W. PUTNAM.

IT was the last performance of the season, and Beppo's act was the last number on the program. Already signs of weariness had begun to crop out in the audience, but a buzz of admiration swelled up as this great king of beasts came majestically into the big performing cage and faced his trainer. Beppo had nearly killed the man only a few weeks previously, and his subsequent appearances before the public had been rare and greatly applauded, though it was a question with his keeper whether the applause was quite agreeable to him. This night he was very plainly out of humor, and at the very beginning of his act he balked.

Maxwell's shoulder was a little sore yet from the late encounter, and his imagination quite vivid. Still, he undertook to urge the dangerous brute by sharply cracking his whip. The lion only snarled at him, retreating a little, sullen and determined. Again and again the lash gave out its warning snap. Beppo's warnings were fully as vigorous and quite as easily understood.

Maxwell spoke a few hurried words to the watchful attendants outside the cage, and there was presently passed in to him a longer, heavier whip, a chair and a revolver. The latter he fired twice rapidly and then handed out through the bars again. Beppo cowered a little at the report, but did not budge an inch. Then the man advanced boldly into the centre of the arena, carrying the chair in front of him. The lion shifted about uneasily, circling at a safe distance, but without any show of repentance.

A hush fell upon the audience. It was evident to all that this was not a part of the acting, and it looked as if a crisis might be rather close at hand. The big brute was now between Maxwell and the cage door.

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Again Maxwell cracked his heavy lash, this time very near the beast's nose. It drew out Beppo's ire in the shape of another snarl and a spring at the whip. This added a good deal to the dramatic effect of the situation, but in every other respect the trainer might as well have snapped his finger. Plainly the man was getting somewhat apprehensive. Still, he was game, and perhaps a little angry withal. Again his lash shot out, and this time Maxwell's arm went with it far enough to carry it within landing distance. The point of the lash fell sharply upon the big monarch's nose. Royalty had been outraged, and with a roar the huge brute charged upon his antagonist. Maxwell seized the chair by the back and thrust it out in his opponent's face. The obstacle, slight as it seemed, stopped him and sent him circling about the cage, sullen and watchful. Again the lash just reached him, and again he charged, until checked by this simple barrier. Then Maxwell blundered, either through anger or excitement. With the brute so close to his defense he struck again, and this time a good deal more than the tip of the lash left its sting. Almost as it fell, the huge paw shot out and, with one sweep, struck the chair whirling from the trainer's hand. It crashed upon the floor, a mass of fragments, and exposed the man entirely to his infuriated foe.

There was a great cry of horror from the audience, quickly hushed by warning signs from the attendants. Then almost the stillness of death settled over the place as the people, strained and tense, watched those two antagonists face to face, so very near each other and about to begin a struggle that could only result fatally to the man. Maxwell stood rigid as a stone wall — he dared not move. The lifting of a hand at that moment would have launched that tawny death upon him instantly, but he kept his head and, possibly by his very coolness, delayed the impending onslaught. For one instant those two stood waiting, glaring at each other, motionless. Outside the cage an unerring marksman was noiselessly sighting a rifle at the big brute's head — a desperate alternative and almost surely a fatal one to Maxwell. Even if the bullet went true, the lion was nearly certain to crush him down in its death leap, but there appeared to be no other chance. Then, just as the sharpshooter was about to press the

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trigger, while the lion seemed to almost hang suspended over Maxwell in his fatal spring, every light in the great tent went suddenly out. The electric current had failed.

The shock of this sudden plunge into blackest darkness at such a dramatic instant cut the cord of human control short off and there was something like a panic in the audience. This wild confusion outside the cage, following so closely upon the abrupt change from the light of noon-day to absolute night, probably disconcerted the lion somewhat for an instant and drew his attention, though once his equilibrium was restored, which would be very soon, the advantage of the changed conditions lay unquestionably with him. Maxwell, too, was startled by the change, but was so accustomed to dramatic situations that he was not too much disturbed to make the most of the diversion. Quietly, but quickly as he could, he began to move cautiously backward in what he thought was the direction of the cage door. Hope again returned to him.

He had nearly reached the door in safety, and was already wondering how he could notify the attendants of his presence without attracting the attention of his enemy when, with a roar of rage, the lion bounded forward. He had discovered his escaping prey. With safety almost in reach, but with his situation now a hundred times more desperate than before, Maxwell crouched back against the bars of the cage not two feet from the door and gave himself up for lost. At that instant every light burst forth again as suddenly as it had disappeared and with a shock almost as disconcerting. Beppo stopped short, bewildered and cowed by the sudden glare.

In a flash, with the returned light, the watchful attendants took in the situation. Quickly thrusting a temporary partition through the bars, between the lion and his prey, they tore open the door and dragged Maxwell outside, where he collapsed in a limp heap. Then they slammed the door shut again just as the furious beast, recovered from his confusion, came crashing up, determined still, but baffled.

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The Glen Echo Mystery.*

BY WALTER WELLMAN.

[This story of Mystery, Adventure and Love, by Mr. Wellman, the famous Arctic Explorer, appeared in THE BLACK CAT just ten years ago. It is reprinted at the request of new and old readers, and in the hope that some one will write its equal.]

SIX months ago, through the death of a kinsman in Chicago, a lot of old pictures, furniture, bric-a-brac and papers came into my possession. Most of these things were stored away in the garret of my house. One day, having occasion to go to the storeroom, my attention was attracted to an old-fashioned, battered leather trunk. I had often thought of satisfying my curiosity as to its contents, but had never been able to find a key that would fit the lock. This day, however, it occurred to me that the ancient leather contrivance was of no value, and that a knife would do quite as well as a key; so I whipped out my pocket-knife and ripped a long slit in the leather top.

Within I found a large number of packets of old letters, account books and diaries, and all sorts of manuscripts and pamphlets. All these I tumbled out upon the floor, and looked through them in an idle way. At first I found nothing of unusual interest; but soon I came upon a packet of peculiar shape. It was apparently a sort of home-made envelope, composed of two pieces of old-fashioned blue linen paper folded and glued together. Upon the face of the packet was inscribed these words:—

Strictly Private
Never to be opened by anyone but me
Henry Stone.

This was the signature of my dead kinsman, and I suppose I should have respected his injunction; but I did not. My curi-

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osity was stronger than my reverence for the dead, so I slit open the packet.

Now I wish I had not done so. By prying into the secrets of the past, accidentally placed within my keeping, I have come face to face with a mystery which appalls me. For days and days and nights and nights I have turned it over in my mind, have looked at it from every point of view, have analyzed, searched, thought, imagined. But it has been all in vain. I am completely baffled. So are my friends to whom I have submitted the matter. Our combined ingenuity fails to afford a solution.

What I found within the packet of old blue linen paper was simply the following three cuttings from newspapers of long ago : —

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE AT GLEN ECHO.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Oct. 20. — The police officials here and detectives from New York are unable to throw any light upon the mysterious disappearance of Sylvester Baldwin from the house of our esteemed fellow townsman, Prof. Edwin Stone, who lives in the old Stone manor house at Glen Echo, one of the picturesque suburbs of this city. Mr. Baldwin strangely disappeared last Sunday night, and though diligent search has been made for him during the forty-eight hours that have elapsed, not a single clue has been obtained.

Mr. Baldwin's home is in Boston. He came here about two weeks ago to visit Professor Stone, who was his classmate at Harvard. A house party was given in his honor, and among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. George Jones, of Albany, Miss Irene Davidge, of New York, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, of Yonkers. Mr. Baldwin was about twenty-five years of age, and a rising young lawyer of Boston. He was unmarried, but it is whispered that he had become engaged since his arrival here.

Mr. Baldwin was in fine health and spirits. Almost every day the guests had indulged in picnics, boating excursions, fishing, horseback riding and other amusements. Mr. Baldwin was the life of the party with his vivacity, wit and love of fun. On many of these excursions it was impossible for Professor Stone to go, as it is well known that in his laboratory, located on the roof of the manor house, he is carrying on some very important experiments. When he felt compelled to remain in his workshop, Professor Stone designated Mr. Baldwin to act as his representative in the entertainment of the party.

Sunday last the ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by Professor Stone's aged mother, with whom he lives, attended divine services in the morning, and spent the afternoon in walks and drives. Toward evening, the weather growing colder, they all assembled in the big dining hall, where they made a rousing log fire in the old-fashioned fireplace. They had refreshments and music, and Mr. Baldwin's fine baritone voice was never heard to better advantage. About ten o'clock, after planning their excursion for the next day, all retired to their rooms on the second floor.

Mr. Baldwin was heard by Mr. and Mrs. Jones and by Miss Davidge, who

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occupied adjoining rooms, to enter his chamber a few moments after they had reached their own apartments. He was whistling softly or humming an air, indicating the happy condition of his mind. He was also heard closing a window, and closing and latching the outside blinds. Between the apartment of Mr. Baldwin and that occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Jones there is a door, somewhat warped by time, and through the cracks and the big old-fashioned keyhole Mr. Jones heard Mr. Baldwin bounce into bed; but as the light in his room was not extinguished, as Mr. Jones noticed when he put out his own light and retired, the supposition is that Mr. Baldwin was reading in bed as was his habit before going to sleep.

From that moment not the slightest trace of the young lawyer has been secured. The last known of him, he was apparently lying in bed, reading, a happy man. Next morning he was not in his room. All his clothing and effects, save only the pajamas which he wore as a night robe, were in the apartment. He had disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up.

It is inconceivable that Mr. Baldwin suffered an attack of mental aberration and wandered away, for there had been a light fall of snow that evening and no tracks were found in it around the house. The barn and outbuildings, as well as every nook and cranny of the manor house, were carefully searched. The police looked into the haymows, and even lowered a man into the wells. They scoured the country around, but no one had seen or heard of a man wandering about in his pajamas. If Mr. Baldwin left the house, he went away without shoes, hat or clothing; and as cold weather has prevailed since his disappearance, it is almost inconceivable that he has not been forced to apply for shelter or food during the last forty-eight hours.

The detectives do not believe that Mr. Baldwin left the house. The morning after his disappearance the window blinds in his room were all found fastened on the inside. So, too, were the front door and the rear or kitchen door and side door of the house. All were locked, with the keys in place inside. The detectives have satisfied themselves that the fall of snow Sunday evening ceased about nine o'clock, and it would have been impossible for Mr. Baldwin to wander away, or be carried away, without leaving traces of footsteps.

But neither Mr. Baldwin living nor Mr. Baldwin dead is to be found in the house now. The search has been thorough from cellar to garret. Professor Stone's laboratory upon the roof has been thoroughly ransacked. As is known to our citizens, Professor Stone is engaged in investigations looking toward a new illuminating process and also in the water-proofing of fabrics. For these purposes he keeps upon the roof quite a collection of apparatus, retorts, gas generators, a large lot of fabric, some of which has been chemically treated, tools, fine instruments, etc. Professor Stone says he was in his laboratory hard at work the night his friend disappeared. No other member of the family or any of the guests heard Mr. Baldwin's steps that fateful night. Professor Stone insisted that the detectives should thoroughly search his laboratory. The officers opened the gas machines, sifted the cinders in all the retorts and overhauled all the piles of fabric. They found not the slightest trace of the missing man, dead or alive.

Professor Stone and all the members of his house party, so merry a few days ago, are bowed down with grief. They not only fear that Mr. Baldwin is dead, but they are overwhelmed by the mystery which surrounds them. They feel that they are living within the shadow of a tragedy which has not been explained and which thus far is wholly inexplicable.

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MYSTERY PILED ON MYSTERY.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Oct. 22. — The mystery of the disappearance of Sylvester Baldwin is not yet cleared up. In fact, it grows deeper and darker. This morning a telegram was received from Saratoga. It read as follows: —

CHIEF OF POLICE, POUGHKEEPSIE: Body of man in night-clothes found last Monday morning at daylight by mail carrier on bridle-path in the Adirondacks about one hundred miles from here. What was date of your man's disappearance?

CITY MARSHAL.

To this Chief of Police Kipley replied, giving the date of Mr. Baldwin's disappearance, and adding: "Impossible same man."

Of course it is impossible, and yet it is a most strange and striking coincidence. Have two men disappeared in their pajamas during the past week? This most extraordinary development did not impress Chief Kipley as having any bearing upon the Baldwin case. When asked if there could possibly be any connection between the two incidents he replied: —

"It is absurd to think there was. Mr. Baldwin disappeared after ten o'clock Sunday night. Early next morning the body of a man was found in the Adirondacks, two hundred miles from here. There is no railway nearer than Saratoga. It is a journey of about two days from the place where the body was found to the nearest railway station, and that is by mounted courier. A wagon would need four days over those rough roads. It is a physical impossibility for the body of Mr. Baldwin to be carried to that remote point in the Adirondacks by next morning, and, therefore, we do not need to discuss this phase of the case any farther. The body found in the mountains is that of some other man."

Chief Kipley is undoubtedly right. Your reporter has ascertained that the only train for the north after Mr. Baldwin retired to his room was the midnight express, which does not make connections at Albany for Saratoga. The earliest possible arrival at Saratoga would have been at ten o'clock Monday morning, and that is still one hundred miles by a rough mountain road from the place where the body was found, according to the telegram, at daylight Monday morning.

Notwithstanding the utter impossibility of there being any connection between the two incidents, Miss Davidge, who has taken much

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to heart the strange fate of Mr. Baldwin, has insisted that careful investigation be made of the Adirondack case. In this she is supported by Professor Stone, and by others at the Glen Echo house. Their anxiety is so great that they grasp at straws. Chief Kipley, to humor their strange whim, has agreed to send a man to the mountains to inquire carefully into the finding of the body there, though protesting that it is useless expense and trouble.

Chief Kipley is still convinced, as are all the detectives who have worked on the case, that Mr. Baldwin, living or dead, is still in the manor house. He has expressed his belief to Professor Stone, and the latter has insisted upon a more thorough search. In consequence, the old house has been nearly pulled to pieces. Partitions have been cut down, floors ripped out, walls opened, the floor of the cellar dug up, and the ashes and cinders in every furnace and stove, including the retorts in Professor Stone's laboratory, have been subjected to chemical analysis by Professors Tausig and Bruinier, of the Polytechnic School. The barns and outbuildings, strawstacks and wells, have all been researched. Every scrap of paper in Mr. Baldwin's rooms has been scrutinized. All the inmates of the house have been subjected to another examination, but without disclosing any new facts. Not a single trace of Mr. Baldwin or of the manner in which he left or was taken from his room, not even a shadow of a clue, has been discovered.

MR. BALDWIN'S BODY FOUND.

AN ASTOUNDING CASE.

SARATOGA, Oct. 26.—The body found in the Adirondacks a week ago this morning was that of Sylvester Baldwin, after all. It has been positively identified by Professor Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Miss Irene Davidge, who came here to view it, accompanied by your reporter. But instead of clearing up the mystery, this discovery has darkened it into one of the most inexplicable crimes of the century.

All we know now is that Mr. Baldwin is dead; that he disappeared from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo after ten o'clock Sunday night, the 18th inst.; that his body was found at daylight next morning two hundred miles away, a hundred miles from the nearest railway; and that he must have been foully murdered.

Detective Brown, who was sent by Chief Kipley to investigate the Adirondack case, reached Saratoga last Friday morning, and by hard riding over the mountain roads arrived at Cascadeville Saturday evening. There he found the body, which had been brought in from a point eight miles north. Mr. Brown closely questioned the mail carrier who had found the body about six o'clock Monday morning, on his way from Lake Placid. There was no doubt as to the day and hour, as these were attested by

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the mail carrier, Daniel Givins, and by the authorities at Cascadeville, who had sent after the remains, and also despatched a courier to Westport with a telegram to the City Marshal of Saratoga.

When Givins came upon the body it was lying in the road. His horse was frightened by it. The remains lay in a sort of heap, and were not yet quite cold. The skull was smashed, the neck broken, and the head driven in toward the shoulders. Many bones in the body and limbs were broken, indicating that the remains may have been tightly packed in a box or crammed into a cask. The only clothing upon the corpse was a suit of silken pajamas, tied around the waist with a cord of the same material.

The deceased had never been seen in that region, nor was any one known to be missing. The population is sparse, and every tourist and sportsman is known along the trails to the guides, boatmen and innkeepers. No man could carry a human body to that remote spot save upon the back of a horse, and no mysterious horseman or other person was reported from any part of the district. The manner in which the body had made its appearance in the midst of the mountains was as much of a mystery to the people there as the means by which it had been removed from Poughkeepsie was to Detective Brown.

Detective Brown had known Mr. Baldwin, and as soon as he saw the body he was convinced of its identity. Accordingly he sent a courier with a telegram to Chief Kipley, and hired two men and two horses to help him carry the remains to Saratoga. They arrived here at three o'clock this afternoon, and there was a sad scene when our party from Poughkeepsie were admitted to the undertaker's rooms to view the body. Every one at once recognized in the broken and mangled mass of flesh handsome, manly Sylvester Baldwin. Professor Stone was greatly agitated when he beheld the features of his college chum and best friend, and Miss Davidge uttered a cry of pain and would have swooned had not Mrs. Jones led her away.

The face of the deceased is natural. In one of the front teeth is a gold filling just such as Mr. Baldwin had in one of his front teeth. The silken pajamas are precisely like Mr. Baldwin's, and, moreover, his initials "S. B." are embroidered upon a little linen tag under the neck. The name of the maker, a Boston firm, is there, too. Still stronger proof of the identity of the remains, if any were needed, is found in the fact that in a pocket of the pajamas was discovered a locket containing a miniature of Miss Irene Davidge.

There is, therefore, not the slightest doubt whatever that this is the body of Sylvester Baldwin. There can be no doubt, either, that he was murdered. But how and by whom? And above all, how was his body carried, in six or seven hours, some two hundred miles from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo to that lonely spot in the mountains, to reach which a journey of two days and nights is required, even under the most favorable circumstances?

It cannot be possible that the body which we have here is that of another man. It is beyond reason to suppose that there was a simultaneous disappearance of two men, both wearing silken pajamas exactly alike, the two men resembling one another in figure, face, color of eyes and hair, teeth and everything as closely as if they were twins, both bearing the initials "S. B." and both carrying in their pockets a miniature of Miss Irene Davidge, of New York.

Every one is greatly depressed, not only on account of Mr. Baldwin's sad fate, but by the inexplicable mystery surrounding the dreadful tragedy. The police and the detectives are without even a theory. The doctors and professors who have carefully examined the body and subjected parts of

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its raiment to microscopic tests are without any explanation, however shadowy and unsatisfactory. Have the Black Arts been revived, or must	we ascribe this most extraordinary tragedy to the working of some modern miracle?

This is the strange story my curiosity had unearthed from the recesses of my dead kinsman's trunk. You will now see why I am sorry I disobeyed the injunction which I found written upon the blue packet. The tale which these old newspaper clippings tell has rung in my ears and whirled about in my brain, robbing me of sleep and making me nervous and restless. I have searched the old trunk again and again for further light upon it, but without success. I have had a feeling that somehow or other I must discover the dread secret, for this tragedy was in my family. Not only did it occur, or at least have its beginning, in the house of one of my kinsmen, but, now that the circumstances have been brought so strikingly to my attention, I recall that my relation, Professor Stone, married the Miss Davidge who figures in the story, lived with her in happiness for many years, and reared a fine family of boys and girls. Though I had never known either Professor Stone or his wife, Mr. Henry Stone, their brother, who left to my charge the fateful trunk, has told me of the professor's successful and useful career and happy home life.

But all my efforts have been unavailing. I am unable to find a clue or even to evolve a satisfactory theory. I can only give my readers the facts and leave them to struggle with the problem, as I have struggled.

. . . . . .

Postscript.—The foregoing was written some months ago. Meanwhile I have made strenuous efforts to throw off the strange fascination which this mystery has exerted upon me — to stop thinking and worrying about it; but to no purpose. It has continued to harass me. To-day, feeling more desperate than usual, I went up to the garret with a hatchet and a big knife, determined to cut the old trunk to pieces in order to discover if its shell contained any clue to the mystery. Underneath the lining in the bottom I found a letter apparently no more than five or six years old, which read as follows : —

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San Francisco, June 20, 1892.

My dear Brother Henry:—I am writing this letter to you with my own hand, despite my physical weakness. It is the last letter I shall ever write to you, for I know my end is fast approaching. The doctor tells me I shall recover, but he cannot deceive me.

I have, as you know, led a busy, a useful, a successful life. My inventions have brought me distinction and reward. There is only one thing in my career which I regret, and even that does not fill me with much remorse. Once there came to me a moment in which all that life seemed to promise me — all happiness, success, and ambition — were involved in a struggle for mastery between two men — myself and another.

It is the law of nature that when two forces come in collision the weaker must give way. Nature has thus established the principle of the survival of the fittest, the dominance of the superior over the inferior. It matters not whether the struggle comes between planets or molecules, men or animals, nations or tribes, the law is the same. No man can be above the law of his being and his surroundings; it is his right and duty to work out his salvation within the sphere and under the principles which nature has ordained.

And yet in my case that which I had to do was extremely disagreeable. I had to remove a man from my pathway. One or the other had to suffer a most grievous loss, a fatal disappointment; and when this clash of interests came I had the right, under nature's laws, to defend myself. The man whose life crossed mine, and whom it was necessary for me to remove, was my best friend, and, for the moment, my guest. These circumstances added to the unpleasantness of my task, but did not deprive me of my right of self-preservation — a right which exists in every living thing, from the humblest to the highest, and whose exercise nature restricts only with limitations of power.

You may wonder, brother, why I write these words. I write them because it is not in my nature to die with my secret untold. All these years I have carried it alone, abso-

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lutely alone. An impulse which I can neither describe nor control leads me to share my secret with just one human soul; and of course he can be none but you, my dearest friend and brother, who has shared all his secrets with me.

You will recall all the circumstances of the tragedy which happened at our house in Glen Echo shortly after I left college and while you were in Europe. We have often talked them over in the past, and you, like every one else, tried to solve the mystery. If you had only known what I knew!

I loved Irene Davidge before Sylvester Baldwin did. Before he and she met at our house I was passionately devoted to her. I made up the house party for the purpose of providing a good opportunity to press my suit, which I knew was not unpleasing. Before she returned home I had confidently expected she would be my promised wife. But from the first day she met Baldwin I knew my star was setting and his was in the ascendant. He was rapid and prosperous in his love-making, and I was forgotten. In a week they were lovers. One day I saw him kiss her as they stood behind some rose bushes in the garden. Had I not been a philosopher, a man of cool, calm reasoning, I should have killed him there and then.

But you know my self-possession, my absolute control of self, my favorite theory that he who can master himself can master the world. All that night I reasoned it out with myself. My conclusions, which to me then, as now, appeared logical, were as follows: —

1. Without her my life is ruined, as I know myself well enough to know I shall never love again.

2. If he lives she will be his, and I, the superior man in all save those superficial qualities which attract the other sex, shall be the loser in life's battle.

3. Nature has ordained that the superior shall triumph, and therefore I have the right to remove him from my way.

4. If I do remove him, in proper fashion, she will be mine, as she would have been mine had he not come between us. Therefore his removal will give me that which I must have.

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Conclusion : I will remove him.

Action being determined upon, it only remained to decide the means. It was necessary that everything should be done in a prudent and orderly way. There must be no danger of discovery or even of suspicion being fastened upon me, for of course that would defeat the purpose in view. To obviate the possibility of pain or humiliation to our dear mother, or to you, my brother, was as much my duty as to protect the mind of Miss Davidge from being poisoned against me. Therefore it was necessary to proceed only after thorough consideration of all the possibilities. A minor point, but still one worthy of attention, was that I should not be compelled to do any actual butchering with my own hands, nor have any gruesome scenes about me. Even in this supreme moment, when I was successfully to work out my destiny or utterly ruin myself, I could not overlook the fact that I was a gentleman. Nor could I take the risk of employing a confederate.

In a few hours my plans were laid. I hope you will agree with me that they were laid with judgment, skill, and thoroughness, as became a man of science and self-possession. Fortunately I had in my laboratory all the materials needed for my operations. But there was much work to do. Day and night I toiled up there on the roof of the old house, where you and I afterward passed so many happy hours while perfecting my inventions. I absented myself as much as possible from the house party, in part because I could not endure seeing him and her together, and in part because I needed all the time for my preparations. During a period of one hundred hours I took only as much sleep as one ordinarily gets in twenty-four.

At last I was ready. I remember that it was Sunday noon, just after services, that I tested my work, reviewed all my calculations, and found that nothing had been neglected. After dinner in the evening I spent some time with the party in the dining-room, and the loving glances exchanged between Sylvester and Irene were more endurable to me than they had hitherto been. Excusing myself about nine o'clock,

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I went upstairs. Entering Baldwin's room, I struck a match and found the book which he was engaged in reading. It was "Horace's Odes," from my library. I knew Sylvester's habit of reading for an hour before going to sleep — he formed it in college. Opening the volume to the bookmark, I turned over six pages and inserted there this note which I had prepared: —

Dear Sylvester: — If you are not too sleepy when you find this, come up to the laboratory. I have something important to show you. E. S.

I calculated that it would take him a quarter of an hour to read from his bookmark to my note, and I felt sure he would come, as he had displayed much interest in my experiments, and had complained because of late I had admitted him so rarely to the laboratory. My only fear was that, in the time which I had given him, not all of the other people in the house would be asleep, as I naturally did not want any one to know he had visited me. At the same time I dared not place the note farther on in the book, lest he should not reach it before falling asleep himself. Of course I could have deferred the removal till another night, but now wind and weather favored, and I courted no delays.

He came a few moments before eleven o'clock. I was ready for him.

"Sylvester," said I, "here is a machine I have built for experimental purposes, and I want you to help me test it."

"All right, Edwin," he replied; "what is it now?"

"A new gas-holder, made of silk," said I; "and here is some of the new gas. Take a good whiff of it — it is like wine in the nostrils."

He took the metal flask which I handed him, turned the cock, and in a moment or two fell insensible at my feet. I had filled the flask with a combination of chloroform and hydrogen, under pressure, and when the cock was turned a cloud of most powerful anæsthetic fumes burst into his face.

Now I was master of the situation. First I locked the door leading to the floor below. I noted with satisfaction that he had brought my note with him, thus saving me a per-

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ilous trip down to his room after it. I burned it in my furnace. A look at the anemometer showed a wind movement of thirty miles an hour, and I was glad to see that the barometer was still falling. If it had been possible for a man of my temperament to have faltered in a set purpose, the sight of the locket containing Irene's portrait, which had fallen from the breast pocket of his pajamas as he fell, would have served to nerve me for my task.

With your knowledge of my thoroughgoing methods, dear brother, you will easily imagine how carefully I had planned everything. Sylvester's exact weight I had ascertained by a casual inquiry a few days before to be one hundred and fifty-three pounds. I assumed that he would come to me without stopping to dress, for he was hardy and athletic, and proud of his ability to endure exposure — an important point on account of the nicety of my calculations. The weight of the gas-bag was eighteen pounds, and of its lines and netting, five pounds; total, one hundred and seventy-six pounds. By careful test I had found the weight of my gas — it was nearly pure, dry hydrogen — was eighty thousandths of an ounce per cubic foot; and as air weighs one and two tenths ounces per foot, I had a net power of fully one and one-tenth ounces per foot. The gas-bag was spherical, and a little more than eighteen feet in diameter, giving it a capacity of three thousand one hundred and fifty cubic feet, equal to two hundred and seventeen pounds lifting force.

It was necessary to have a little margin, to compensate for loss of gas by leakage. Careful calculations of the rarity of the atmosphere at various altitudes showed me the bag with the burden would at first ascend to a height of about five thousand six hundred feet, where there would be an exact counterbalance of the weight of air displaced and the weight of the apparatus and its burden. Then it would slowly descend as the gas escaped from the bag. It was, of course, desirable that it should at first ascend to a great altitude, as that would prevent its being seen by any one who might be astir. It was quite as desirable that the whole machine should remain in the air at least six hours, that it might be carried a

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proper distance away. At the same time, it must drop its burden before daylight — before any one could see it and perchance understand its dread significance.

It was highly important, too, from my view-point, that the body should be found sooner or later, and be unmistakably identified; otherwise Irene might take it into her pretty head to do the romantic by waiting year after year for the possible reappearance in life of her absent lover, which would be decidedly unpleasant for me. Hence I did not dare to arrange to send the apparatus out to sea, as I might easily have done. For the same reason I replaced in the pocket of Sylvester's pajamas the locket with Irene's miniature in it which had fallen from it.

It was absolutely necessary that the apparatus and its burden should not be found together, for in that case it would be easy to trace the two to a common source, — to wit, my laboratory, — thus defeating the purpose in view. To obviate this danger I had made careful experiments in the effect of various acids upon fibres, and was able accurately to determine the time in which a given quantity of diluted vitriolic acid would eat away a cord of given strength so that it would part under the strain of a weight of one hundred and fifty-six pounds. By this means I made sure that the apparatus and its burden should be separated before daylight, the latter to fall to earth, and the former, relieved of its incubus, to ascend to the skies and fly perhaps a thousand miles before coming down.

Such a cord, twisted with acid and timed to sustain the load just six hours, I tied about the waist of Sylvester and made fast to the netting underneath the gas-bag.

The moment had come. Carefully I looked all about from the roof to see that no one was watching my operations, and noted with satisfaction that the night was extremely dark and in all respects favorable to my purpose.

At quarter past eleven o'clock, Sunday evening, October 18, I took Sylvester's living right hand in mine and pressed it with a farewell greeting. Then with three rapid slashes of my knife I cut the guy-ropes, and my little balloon, with

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the body of my rival dangling beneath it, darted upward and northward into the gale.

Your affectionate brother,

EDWIN STONE.

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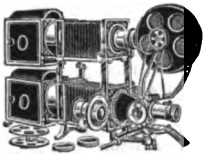

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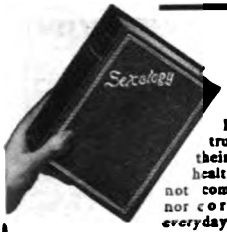

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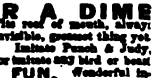

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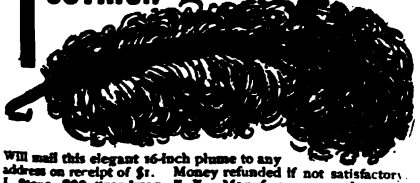

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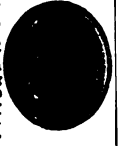

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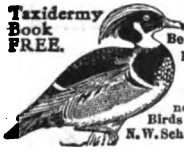

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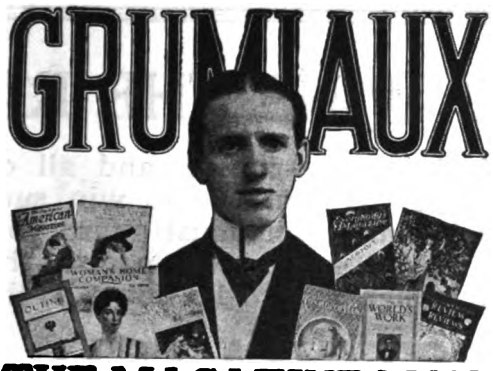

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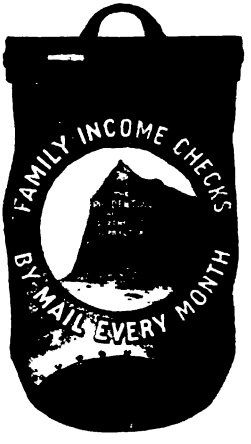

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The Black Cat

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The Desire of the Eyes.*

BY FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.

THE train departed noisily, carrying away, it seemed to Allwin, the hum of Paris and the clatter of New York, the roar of the sea and the roar of the railroad. Deep quiet settled upon the station again. The village slept in the sun, in the dreamy peace that Allwin knew well and had so hated a few years ago.

He had hated it then because he had been its prisoner, but now it appeared to him charming. There was no stir on the long street; the rich weather-beaten brick of the old house glowed in the sun, and the silence was tempered only by the hum of the bees and the whirring of the grasshoppers. Here and there a buggy stood at a store, but as Allwin walked through the village he met few faces. He knew them all, but no one appeared to know him, and he felt somehow pleased at this, and did not speak.

It is pleasant to come home trailing clouds of glory when one is sure that their divinity will be recognized, and Allwin felt sure of recognition in the only quarter that he cared about. The glory perhaps was not so great — an honorable mention at the Paris Salon for a life-size figure in marble, which had been

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promptly sold, half a dozen paragraphs in the Paris papers, an order for a portrait bust — but he felt that he was launched. He revolved a dozen plans as he walked toward Dr. Wakefield's house; he intended to have a little exhibition of his own in New York when he could get something ready for it, to establish a working studio somewhere, to try to pick up a few commissions for the sake of ready money. But first of all he intended to be married.

If it had not been for Alice Wakefield he would never have come back to Maryland; but then, if it had not been for her he might never have left it. Life is no very easy problem for a young fellow with no money, no parents, and a certain gift for sculpture — the most expensive of the arts to cultivate, and the one that makes least popular appeal. A couple of terms at the New York Academy of Design and the Corcoran School had been all he had been able to obtain, and a block of marble was as unattainable as a star before he came to know the Wakefields.

Of course the wealthy doctor and his daughter had always been prominent in his recollections of the town, but his world had not touched theirs. Dr. Wakefield had not practised for years, but occupied himself with chemical research in private, assisted sometimes by Alice. They were often absent, in New York, in Washington, sometimes even in France or Italy, and they seemed to Allwin to lead an ideal life, full of the things his homesick heart most desired.

Allwin could scarcely remember just how he had arrived at a footing of intimacy in the Wakefield house, but, given the intimacy, it was inevitable that he should have loved Alice. No artist herself, she was born, Allwin told himself, to be the inspiration and confidante of artists. She knew the grammar of all the arts and was wise enough to confine herself to appreciation; it was only in science that she dabbled. She was beautiful with a dark glow like a ruby, subtle, brilliant, daring, and she incarnated to Allwin the whole fascination and splendor of a world of life and culture that he had only read of. He did not suspect that to her he seemed to represent the romance and daring of artistic struggle, that she knew only in books, for in the world its fermentation goes on beneath the surface.

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Allwin followed her counsels religiously, and loved her desperately in silence. When he finally dared to tell her so, and learned that she also loved him, it was incredible to him; but time familiarized him with the conception. Finally he accepted more than counsel from her, and sailed away for Paris with two thousand dollars, and an oath in his heart that he would come back with a piece of marble in the Salon, or not at all.

Well, he had his marble in the Salon, he had a commission or two, but he knew that the real struggle was still to come. The door that had half opened might close again; time and chance and a desperate energy that he knew that he possessed were needed to force it wide. But an agreeable, half-conscious background to this was his coming marriage. It was no mercenary arrangement to him; he would have been proud to marry Alice without a cent; but the money was there, and he could not be blind to the incalculable advantage it would be to him in the next five years. It would give him the time and chance he needed; it would enable him to work slowly and to please himself, which is the best but slowest way of pleasing the world. Success, love and wealth — it was at least twice as much as any man had a right to expect from life, and as Allwin walked up the curved gravel path between the rows of shrubbery he felt the need of humility lest the gods should be jealous.

The mellow brick of the rambling old house preserved the grace and dignity that had charmed him before; it had been built by a Wakefield of the seventeenth century with brick brought from England. Even more than most men of his craft, Allwin loved beauty and hated the ugly and the deformed; they were deadly to him; an irresistible physical need forced them to put them out of his sight. It was the rich beauty of Alice that had first drawn him; and at the sight of the stately dwelling he realized more fully than ever what the friendship of the Wakefields had saved him from. In a life of unrelieved, sordid poverty he would have done nothing; he would have fallen to one of the fatal resources of the over-sensitive — drink or drugs or a hardened aridity of soul.

But it seemed to him that there was a strangely quiet air about the house. No one was in sight, there were no chairs on

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the verandas. He noticed that the windows of Alice's room were closely shuttered, and a Virginia creeper had spread thickly across them. Yet both the occupants were at home and expecting him, he knew, and it was with a kind of chill presage that he rang the bell.

"My dear boy! I'm more delighted to see you than I can tell you!" exclaimed Dr. Wakefield, who came down to the library at once. He shook the sculptor's hand vigorously, but to Allwin's already nervous apprehension there seemed something uneasy beneath the warmth of his greeting.

"No more delighted than I am to be here," replied Allwin, looking vaguely about the room. All was as it had used to be, only the doctor's face had aged and grown wrinkled.

"Miss Alice is well, I hope?" he added.

"We've followed your success from here, of course."

"You are very kind. It wasn't very much success. I hope Miss Alice is well?"

The doctor hesitated, regarding Allwin with a look that seemed to be of pain, and perhaps pity.

"Yes, she is well — only her eyes."

"Her eyes? She isn't—"

"Oh, no, not blind. At least, not permanently. But at present she is obliged to stay in a darkened room."

"But you wrote me nothing about it. What was the matter?"

"It was an accident in the laboratory. Some acid fumes injured her eyes. It was almost six months ago. She wouldn't let me tell you, for she hoped to be recovered before you came back, but progress has been slower than we expected. She may have to stay in the dark for several months; it is the only chance of a cure."

There was something hopeless in the doctor's tone that made Allwin suspect that the chance of a cure was slight. He gazed at her father, stupified with the shock, and unable to form his lips to any words of sorrow or sympathy.

"She knows that you are expected back to-day. She wished me to tell you that she — that you, in short that you are free." went on the doctor, stumbling over his message.

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"Free? How?"

"Why, that you are released from your engagement."

"But I don't want to be released!" cried Allwin, collecting himself. "Good Heavens, what must she think of me! Doesn't she know that I wouldn't give her up if she were ten times blind?"

"I don't know," said the old doctor, indecisively. "It's a difficult matter. I wouldn't venture to advise either of you. But if you really take that view of it, I won't deny that it's a great relief to me. She is much attached to you, very much attached, I may say, and a nervous shock just now, you know, might —"

"How could either of you doubt what view I would take? Can I see her?"

"Well, you can talk to her. She is in a perfectly dark room, you know. I'll go up and tell her that you are here."

Left alone, Allwin suddenly realized that Alice's image had grown faint and distant. Did he love her still, or was it only the clinging perfume of past love that he retained, a perfume often sweeter than love itself? She was still his dearest friend; —he was afraid to question himself more closely.

Dr. Wakefield led him upstairs, tapped at a door at the end of the hall, opened it immediately and drew aside a black curtain.

"Is that you, Dad? Is Cecil there?" he heard Alice's voice say out of the darkness.

The room was perfectly dark, and Allwin was afraid to move. The door had closed instantly and softly. He heard the rustle of a dress, and then a hand touched his shoulder gropingly.

"Is this you, Cecil?"

He caught the pitiable tremor and terror in it, and his whole heart melted in a passion of pity and tenderness. Alice's head fell on his breast; she clung to him and sobbed. She cried with her whole body, with the total abandonment of women who seldom weep. She shook and trembled so convulsively that Allwin was alarmed. Her father had stolen noiselessly away again.

"There, there, dearie!" he murmured, as if she had been a child. "It's all right now. Here I am, and I love you. Don't

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cry so. For God's sake, don't, Alice, or you'll break my heart!"

He tried to stroke her hair, but at the motion she drew away from him. Her sobbing ceased, and there was silence in the dark room.

Remembering her as she had been, brilliant, daring, joyous, her eclipse struck him with horror. So large a part of his own life was made of color and beauty of line and form, that life without light seemed to him the worst of hells. She, too, had rejoiced in the sun like himself, and now darkness was her portion. Allwin was filled with such sympathetic pain that he mistook it for love.

"I'm better now," said Alice. "Don't be afraid; it's all over, and I don't often do this sort of thing, you know. I had been waiting for you so long, and —

"Feel about. You'll stumble over a chair somewhere," she resumed in a different tone. "There. Now tell me about Paris, and what you've been doing."

Allwin was so relieved at the firmness of her voice that he began hastily to talk, rapidly, at random, anyhow, to remove the meeting to a less emotional level. It was like speaking into a telephone, to drop his words into that thick darkness, and at first Alice made few replies. He wondered nervously what she was doing behind that veil of night; but by degrees she began to take more part in the conversation, evidently with a forced control at first, then with apparently genuine enjoyment.

The memory of their long hours of intimate talk and speculation had been the thing that Allwin had kept with most pleasure, and he found that Alice's charm had not waned. Her companionship was as delightful as ever, and he was amazed to discover that, in spite of her eyes, she was familiar with the newest currents of ideas, with all the events of the world of art and letters.

"Oh, Dad reads to me," she said in reply to his question. "I have a hired reader sometimes, too. We take three or four foreign periodicals, as usual. Then we sent for all the photographs of the last Salon that we could get, of course. I couldn't see them when they came, but Dad described them to me. I feel as if I had really seen your statue. Where did they place it?"

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"Near the main stairway," he told her; and his own words evoked a vision of the vast, glass-roofed court, tented with the lofty gray curtains and giant cords and tassels; the soft light, the gravelled ground, and the swarming black figures among the tall white shapes of marble. It was the field of his first victory and there was no spot so sacred.

"They gave it a good place," he said, with a sigh of recollection. "It was sold there, you know. You'll have to go to France to see it."

He checked himself, afraid that he had hurt her. "We'll go together, you know, dear, as soon as your eyes are better."

"I'll never see it — never!" came out of the darkness, with such certainty and despair that it struck him speechless.

"I'll never see Paris again. I'll never see the golden bridge and the palace with the bronze horses on the roof—oh, I know how it looks as well as you do! Cecil"— after a moment of palpitating silence, "do you still love me?"

"Yes, Alice, I truly do," and he meant it.

"No," she returned, with a quiet sadness, "you do not. It is impossible. I feel — I know that I will never be able to see again. At the best, I will have to stay in this darkness for months, perhaps — who knows how long? How can you love a voice in the darkness, or how could you love a woman whom you could never see?"

She was stating the case as Allwin had feared to state it to himself, and his whole being turned in a panic to contradict it.

"I can see your face now — I know it so well," he said. "Whether I can see it or not, it will always be the most precious and the most beautiful face on earth to me, and your love is everything on earth to me, and the voice in the darkness, when it is your voice, will be the only voice that I shall care to hear."

Alice came over to him so softly that he did not know it, till she kissed his forehead.

"God bless you, Cecil! Your heart is full of nobleness, and I think you have saved my life. I'm not ashamed now to tell you how much you are to me. I have no pride left. I'm nothing now but a wretched blind woman, but if I could help you ever so little, if I could be something in your life, I'd be the proudest

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woman alive. Do you think I can? I've had them read to me for the last three months; I've tired them all out, so that when you came back I'd be able still to talk to you about the things you cared for — so that you wouldn't find me a wearisome invalid. My mind is as good as ever, and I care as much as ever for the things I can't see. And the best of our love was never love, after all; it was the friendship, and the comradeship, and the sympathy, wasn't it? We can always have that."

"You will always have my whole heart's affection," said Allwin, gently. "And my friendship and trust too. Call it what you like, we will have all that is best in life."

. . . . . .

They were married three weeks later, in that darkened room. The faintest twilight was admitted for the ceremony, and Alice was so heavily veiled that not a line of her face could be seen. From that day Allwin lived in the great Wakefield house.

He took possession of the immense stable, now almost unused, and remodeled it, refitted it, and turned it into a studio, and a wagon load of modeling clay arrived from Philadelphia. After much thought and consultation with Alice, he decided to do his work for the present at home, bringing models from the city as he needed them. He had no need to hurry, no need to sell, and he was anxious to make his appearance in America with something notable. Later, he might have a second studio in New York, a show studio, where marble would appear to best advantage, and where he could meet his public.

So began Allwin's strangely doubled existence—days of wrestling with the wet clay, and evenings of long reveries and conversations in the darkened room. And these last seemed so remote from his daylight, so unrelated to the day, that they blended imperceptibly with his own inner life, and Alice seemed his spiritual mistress and the counselor of his unuttered hopes and dreams.

She seemed to be always waiting for him when he tapped at the darkened door, and though, as she had said, she was only a voice in the darkness, it was a voice always full of sweetness and wisdom. Allwin consulted her upon all his plans; he knew already the value of her intuition. He described his work to

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her; they shared his successes and difficulties, and, the mystical darkness rendering confidence easier, they talked long over those old problems of life and art that are too stale for discussion and too insoluble and vital to be forgotten. Allwin had never known the pleasure of opening his heart to such certain sympathy and understanding, and these evenings with Alice became almost at once the thing to which he looked forward during the day. He hardly knew whether it was a relief that she never spoke of love to him; it was all the frankest comradeship, and it was only by glimpses that he divined the presence of a love as strong as it was silent.

What did she do when he was not with her? What memories, what sombre meditations must fill her darkness! Allwin's own life was so wholly made up of the beauty or ugliness of visible things that he could hardly conceive of life without them, and he waited, though with a darkly diminishing hope, for the end of her imprisonment.

The end was still out of sight. Once a month a doctor came up from Philadelphia, spent an hour in the dark room, and afterwards held a long consultation with Dr. Wakefield. The verdict, as Allwin received it afterwards, was always the same. There was some hope still, but she must remain indefinitely in the darkness.

At first Allwin tried to endure this strange married life as unavoidable, but by degrees it finally came to seem almost natural to him. All his days were occupied with other things, and all his forces were concentrated in the studio, where a heap of clay was slowly taking graceful form. But his mind was with Alice, even while he worked with an intensity that he had never felt before. He was working for her applause; he owed to her all that he had, and he wanted to make her the only return that was in his power.

He had reason to remember his debt during all that year, while he worked at high pressure with intervals of absolute rest. The assured peace, the freedom from all material anxieties gave him a command over himself and over his materials that he had never had before. Added to his severe Paris training, these advantages produced results of finished work that pleased even

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him. He told himself that success was in his hand, and he rejoiced with Alice over the certainty of it.

Next winter his marble Hyperion had an exhibition by itself in New York, and it was sold for a price which Allwin would have considered fabulous a few years earlier. But he did not consider it fabulous now, nor as any more than the statue was worth. He had grown already accustomed to money, since he no longer needed it, and when he deposited his check he sent Alice a hundred dollars' worth of roses from town, for she still loved flowers as passionately as if she could see them.

It was on her account that he would not move his working studio to New York, as all his friends advised him to do in the next year. Alice could not well go with him, and he would not desert her so long as she cared for his society. Moreover, he did not like to think what his loneliness would be without her, he had drawn so much of his inspiration from her mind for the last two years.

They had been married for two years, and darkness had been her portion all that time. The doctor's visits had grown rarer, and finally ceased. Alice never would speak of her eyes, and her father replied vaguely to Allwin's questions. Allwin believed that hope had been given up, that it would be better to bring Alice out to enjoy what she could of the sun and the world, but her father seemed to cling still to the ghost of a hope that was dead.

It was so dead for Allwin that, with human selfishness, he had come to find the abnormal state of things quite natural. It had grown so familiar that, without a thought of strangeness, he opened her door and went unerringly to the easy-chair that he knew how to find now in the dark. And the darkness held an invisible, but wise and witty woman, whose whole thoughts were centered upon him, who was always ready with pleasant talk and laughter for his good days, and the tenderest sympathy for his bad ones. Allwin felt something of the occult pleasure of the seraglio in those two years; that dark room was a sort of spiritual zenana, with its voice that no man seemed to hear but himself, and its mysterious face that no man ever saw.

It was so long since he had seen it himself that he came to for-

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get, in spite of old photographs, how Alice looked. He knew that she must have changed greatly, and he unconsciously sketched a likeness of her for his imagination, a sort of composite portrait, made up of the girl he had seen, and the woman he knew she must be, and mixed with it the pure grace of the shapes he worked upon daily. The face of his dreams was pale, clear-cut, worn with pain and confinement and full of a divine sadness, and he fancied that the eyes must have the unseeing and clairvoyant gaze of a noble statue.

It would have been impossible for Allwin to have imagined her otherwise. He attributed beauty to her as he attributed goodness, for by every instinct and by all his training he shrank uncontrollably from deformity as he did from evil.

In November of that year he went to New York, and returned two days sooner than he had intended. It was midnight when he reached home — he was not expected — and the house was locked and dark. He let himself in very quietly, and stole up the stairs, and at the end of the hall he perceived a thread of light under Alice's door. It startled him as a ghost would have done.

There was an electric light in the room, used by the servants while Alice retired to her bedroom beyond, and Allwin suspected that some one had left it carelessly turned on. He opened the door softly and went in to put it out.

Under the light was a great arm-chair turned from him, and he did not notice that there was a woman in it till he was near enough to touch her. Then he shrank back with a gasp of disgust and anger. It was a woman he did not know, hideously repulsive in face as a leper. The creature jumped up, dropping the book she had been reading, and tried to dart past him, but he caught her by the arm.

Then he heard Alice's voice crying as if in agony, "Let me go! Put out the light! Oh, please put out the light!" It took him several seconds to realize that the voice came from the woman he was holding.

"What devilish thing is this?" he heard himself saying blankly over and over. He stared with increasing loathing at the horrible face, the blotched and puffed purple of the skin, like

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some poisonous fungus — but out of the wreck two gray eyes looked at him, and they were Alice's eyes, and it was Alice's voice.

He dropped the woman's arm and put out the light. He heard her drop back into the chair, and then he recognized Alice's dry, convulsive sobbing.

At that sound, at the familiar darkness of the room, the old protecting pity and tenderness came back to him, and again habit showed him the pale and noble face that his imagination had built from illusions. It was only for an instant, and he knew that he would never see that face again in his fancy. It had been blotted out by the hideous mask that he still seemed to see.

The sound of sobbing finally ceased. Allwin was afraid to speak. His blood chilled with a vague, unspeakable dread. Then the light flashed on again blindingly.

After one involuntary glance Allwin averted his head.

"No, you must look at me now," said Alice. "There can be no more concealment and no more darkness. It has come — oh, I knew it would come — but I tried so hard to keep it back!"

She struggled again with her tears, almost hysterically choking, but pity seemed to be frozen now in Allwin's heart. He would not look at her,— he could not have remained in the room if he had looked at her.

"I don't — I don't quite understand," he forced himself to say, calmly: "Tell me. You are not blind, then."

"My eyes are as good as they ever were. They were the only part of my face that escaped, I think. I was wearing glass goggles to protect them from the fumes of the hydrofluoric acid, when something burst and spattered. I thought I should die. When I saw myself next in a mirror I wished I had died. Then I thought that you — might never know."

"But the oculist from Philadelphia?" Allwin stammered, trying to comprehend all the deception that he began to realize had been practised upon him.

"It was only a physician. He treated me. He was an old friend."

"But couldn't you have told me?" Allwin cried, bitterly.

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"I should have been told. Couldn't you have trusted me?"

"Not to shrink from me? No, I knew your nature too well. You would never have married me if you had known."

Allwin knew that this was true. It was the greater reason why he should have known. There was silence for several minutes. Allwin felt that all words were futilities in the face of the situation.

"I know that we should have told you," Alice went on, in a softer and hopeless voice. "Father insisted on telling you, but I would not have it. I made him promise to help me to deceive you. Otherwise, I knew what would be the result. And, Cecil, I could not give you up. You meant more than happiness to me; you were my whole life, my own being, the most vital part of myself. It was in mere desperate self-defense that I lied to you. And I thought that I could make up to you for it. I could help you; I could be the mate of your inner life—your best life. I thought that I could help you and comfort you and encourage you as I sat here in the dark, and I have tried to do it. You know best whether I have succeeded, but do you know that these two years have been full of more happiness than I ever dreamed I could have? They would have been perfect but that I felt that they were founded on a lie. I felt that they could not last. Every day I trembled for what might come, and I hugged every day gained as something that could not be taken from me.

"I was ready to spend my whole life in this dark room," she added, after another tremulous silence. "I hoped for nothing better. I read here and studied, night after night when the house was still, so that you would always find me a companion who understood. You were my world. Sitting here in the darkness I have lived in your life more intensely than yourself."

After another silence: "This trouble made me cling the more to you, you see. I knew that you had loved me, and I hoped that you might go on loving me, or let me love you, at least, and never know."

Allwin groaned inarticulately to himself, stunned and ashamed. He was stupified at this revelation of the undreamed-of capacity of Alice's love, ashamed that it left him cold, and silent because he could not bring himself to give her the only

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comfort she needed. He glanced aside at her again, trembled, but at last forced himself to say:

"There won't be any difference. I shall always love you."

The words sounded grotesquely false and hollow to him, but Alice looked up quickly, palpitating.

"Do you mean that? It's more than I expect — it's more than I ask. But if you do mean it, you are the noblest man that ever lived!" she said, with a kind of wonder.

"I mean it, of course —" Allwin began, but she broke in.

"Think well whether you do mean it. I know your nature — how you hate the ugly. You wouldn't be the artist you are if you didn't. Can you bear to see me every day, and forget how I look? You must decide that, and I won't blame you if —"

"My God — yes — let me go, Alice!" Allwin exclaimed. He felt that he could endure no more of this. He was sick, and quivered to his finger-ends. "All this has — has upset me, you see. We'll arrange things on a better basis to-morrow. It will be all right. Good-bye!"

He hurried out, full of a nervous terror that she might kiss him. Down the stairs and out to his own studio he ran, shaking with such nervous tremors that he almost screamed when a studio drapery flapped his face in the dark. Then the electric light shone out, and he saw around him the white shapes of his own creation — marbles, casts, sketches — in the pure beauty of a world far removed from humanity and its sordid wreckage.

Allwin dropped into a long chair, shut his eyes, and instantly opened them again. It seemed to him that darkness would always be full of shapes of horror.

His duty was clear. He would have to conquer his horror, or act as if he had conquered it, and show himself capable of self-sacrifice in his turn. A far less devotion than she had given him would call for that recompense.

He would do it, he said to himself, trying to blind himself with resolves. He would meet her as usual, only in the full light; he would wear a mask on his face and a bridle on his tongue. And he knew that if the mask fell ever for an instant it would be worse than if he had never attempted to carry out the projected deception.

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He lay down on a couch in the studio, intending to spend the night there. He closed his eyes resolutely, and the whole horror of that scene in her room sprang out in fire on his eyelids. He forced himself to regard it, to look the horror in the face, and he fought his battle there, and he felt himself forced back towards the bitter reality and the impossibility of saving the situation by any fictitious resolution.

The thought of death, of suicide, came to him temptingly as the easiest relief. He considered it, and dismissed it. The problem could be solved by no such crude method, and he could not be such a coward as to slip from the tangle, leaving Alice to bear the burden of her own fate and his self-murder.

But to go on living with her was impossible beyond any self-deception. Sooner or later the lying situation would break down. No peace could grow out of lives saturated with falsehood, and the final catastrophe would be worse than the first.

All his instincts, all his training, fought against him; all the benefits and all the love that she had poured upon him became weights to sink him deeper in dishonor. He felt that he would gladly give up his opening career and all his art in exchange for the strength or the callousness to look Alice in the face and disregard her change, and he knew that he could not do it.

There was only one necessity — that he should never see her again. He did not attempt to defend himself in his action. It was dishonorable, perhaps, but it was inevitable.

There was an early train for New York, and he preferred to wait for it at the station. He did not attempt to imagine what he would do when he reached the city. He vaguely foresaw a life of wretched wandering and failure. It would be his just reward, perhaps, and yet he had a rankling sense of injustice.

He stole out into the darkness, and crossed the lawn to the street, making for the station. He felt that by some juggle he had become unwillingly the lowest of created things.

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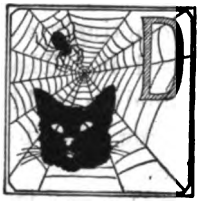
The Kid's Game.*

BY WHITNEY PAYNE.



DEW DROP INN, Tim Hudson's place in northern Michigan, was the retreat unique. Each fall, after the close of the racing season, the same crowd of immaculate, cold-eyed bookmakers, flashy bejeweled owners, and certain of the more prosperous followers, with here and there a portly, genial saloon keeper from the racing towns, came up to take Tim's cure as an antidote for the rigors of the past season at Latonia and a bracer for the coming winter campaign at Oakland or New Orleans. By day they sat on Tim's cool, deep porch overlooking the lake and talked horse to the tune of tinkling ice and sizzing syphons. At night the bachelors and certain of the others who could escape the "Missus" sat tense and quiet until dawn over no-limit games.

Tim and the first arrival of the season, a young stranger bringing the necessary credentials for admittance to Tim's, were sitting on the veranda. The young man looked up from the paper he was reading. "Well, I see they've landed a couple more of these con men down in Cinncy — pretty slick pair from what it says here. Don't look like crooks, either, do they?" he asked, handing the paper to Tim.

Tim took the paper and glanced idly at the pictures of the two crooks — one a young man of likable looks, the other, somewhat older, looked like a prosperous "meet them as they come" drummer.

"Yes," Tim answered, "I sees this write-up this mornin'; it took a heap of a load off my mind, too. I got right chummy with these guys once."

The young man looked up, about to ask a question, when Tim exploded angrily:

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"It certainly makes me peevish when some gay little bee passes me his stinger an' then buzzes off without putting me Jerry as to how he done it."

"Did these fellows get to you?" the young man asked humbly.

"*Did they?* They got to me and stayed some time before they left, and I never knew how they put it over on me till I reads this big spiel about 'em."

"They must be pretty slippery," the young man ventured.

"You're right they're slippery, an' I know several guys who'd like to slide on 'em — but I'll tell you about it; it's too good to keep."

His cigar lit to his satisfaction, Tim began:

"Y' see, I makes it a rule to let no strangers in, just the same old bunch, so when any new guy blows in I hangs out the HSO sign for him unless he's a friend of the bunch. Well, last fall a young fellow, this bloke," pointing to the younger of the two men in the picture, "drops off the 'bus one day after the gang's all here. Nobody waves the 'Welcome to Our City' banner at him, so I dopes him out for a ringer and passes him the not-a-bed-left line of bunk. Well, sir, he shows me a letter from Andy Andrews — you know Andy, best old top in the game — introducin' him. Andy bein' a friend of our'n I thaws out an' makes the kid welcome. The bunch took a shine to him from the flag, an' the dames — on the level, he had 'em all on his list before night — it makes a hit with the spliced boys, 'cause their wives didn't have time to nag 'em, they was so busy pettin' Jimmie; Jimmie Tagney — that's the label he worked under. Well, after a couple o' days, Jimmie comes up to me with a innocent 'Papa, give me a penny' look an' says he hears there's a game goin' on, an' can he sit in? It happens that Spike Denton's wife goes nuttier 'n usual about then an' keeps Spike out every evenin' rowin' around the lake with a dinky lantern tryin' to break the law an' spear that overweight pickerel somebody almost caught in '61, so we lets the kid sit in our game to fill out. On the square, I felt sorry for the sucker. He plays a fair hand — tells us that he was the rah, rah little poker player in college — but you've got to play more'n a fair hand if you keep your pants with that crew — all on th' level, you know, but they played th' game before the kid learned

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th' grand game of Ol' Maid — an' then his luck was putrid, never helped his hand. Well, sir, he played five nights and was about 5,000 crispos to the worse. I has a talk with him then — tells him to stick to the penny-ante game an' the ladies, but he says nix; says he has a hunch that he's due for a killin'. I argues and bullies him, but he finally pulls out a roll about the size of a good healthy cannon and says, 'What the hell, Tim, can't a man spend his money the way he wants to?' — a regular nursery sport's line of bunk, if I ever heard one — Oh, he was a slick one; he had all of us thinkin' that it was a shame to take his gold, but seein' as he was tryin' so hard to divorce that roll, we figures we might as well cut the melon as anybody. Well, sir, that very night the slaughter of us wise guys began to start. The kid shows th' same bum form for the first hour or so, and then something dropped — th' melon was green and sour and wouldn't cut — from then on till mornin' he was so far ahead that we got tired of tryin' to figure out how much we was payin' per minute to keep him amused.

"Lookin' back now, it seems to me that that last pot ought to have set me thinkin', but he had the wool so tight over my eyes that I couldn't see nothin' but the three chorus girls in my hand on which, by th' way, I dropped more than many a Pittsburg stogie does on the real goods. To git to th' point: We was playin' jackpots, ten bones to come in an' ten to open, an' the limit was about ten feet over the roof. I wish you could have seen that pot! Bill Wilson opens for ten an' the kid — I somehow always call him the kid — hikes the opener ten, everybody trailin' in. Bill was dealin' and the kid, sittin' on his left, was the first to draw cards. Bill picks up the deck an' asks the kid how many. 'One,' says he. Just as Bill starts to hand him the card he fumbles the deck an' they falls all over the table an' floor. Well, Bill picks 'em up, shuffles 'em a few, an' as he starts to pass the kid the single paper he called for, the kid pipes up, 'Changed my mind, Bill, slip me the top three.' None of us took no notice of it. I thinks to myself he's decided to draw to a pair instead of his four-flush or bobtail. Well, I won't try to tell you how the bettin' went, but all of us was froze out but Bill an' the kid, each havin' drawn to a pair. Finally, Bill throws in his last chip —

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a blue one that's worth twenty-five long green. 'There's twenty-five,' he says; 'I'm twenty-five shy on a call of your fifty raise.' 'I got two pair of fives,' says the kid. Well, Bill's a good loser an' he smiles when he lays down one spots full on kinks, but the smile hurt just the same. The kid raked in the pot an' cashed in $8,000 in chips beside the pile of greenbacks in front of him that looks like a St. Pat. day parade. As we breaks up the kid says, 'Well, things is lookin' alive, eh?' an' he laughs that cold, unpleasant laugh that you never forget if you hear it once. I used to hear it lots when I was dealin' stud on the Mississippi, but I never heard no college boy let one loose before — it's a dyed-in-the-wool gambler's laugh, an' it set more'n one of us thinkin'.

"Next morning, or rather afternoon, the kid was rowin' some of the dames out after pond lilies, so when Bill Wilson comes out on the porch where the rest of us was nursin' some man's-sized grouches, things was clear for a post-mortem on last night's game.

"'Boys,' says Bill, 'I ain't whinin' nor I ain't got no proof for the line of thought my busy little brain has been handin' me since last night's game, but either that kid's a damn fool or a crook. Y' know he changed his mind on that last pot an' drew three papers — he drew to a pair of fives an' broke a four-flush or a bob-tail to do it. Now, I contends that a guy is either a nut, or has got the deck dope, if he breaks either one to draw to a pair of phoebes — ain't that right? An' then did you pipe the laugh he hands us as he stuffs the swag in his jeans?'

"'Now, look here, Bill,' I says, 'that sounds like the right dope, but I guess the kid's just a lucky mut, 'cause I don't see how he could be a crook; you know,' I warms up, feelin' that the kid was bein' misjudged, 'you an' me an' the rest of the all-night gang here is too old hands to fall for any cold decks or palmed cards, or any of them crusties, so all the chance a sharper would have with us is marked cards, an' you know, Bill, that I buys a supply of cards every year before the gang comes up, an' that we use new decks with the seals whole every night, an', besides, I keeps them cards locked up in the safe, so how could the kid mark 'em? No, Bill, I guess that he's just a plain damn fool, but nix on the crook talk.'

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"Well, do you know, sir, that my line of talk convinces Bill, so that he begs my pardon for his suspicious line of bunk. There ain't much more to it. The kid stays a week longer an' plays every night, losin' a big pile now an' then, but always winnin' it back with a few thousand per cent. interest. After he goes we hold an informal caucus an' nominates ourselves to the penny-ante class for the rest of the season. We figures that the kid got to us for about $35,000, which we agrees is rank extravagance for one week's amusement which didn't amuse."

Tim stopped, arose slowly and, walking to the edge of the porch, threw his cigar stub away.

"Well," the young man asked eagerly, "you said the article in to-day's paper cleared it up. What's the answer? — I give up."

Tim walked back to his chair, picked the newspaper up and, holding it up before the young man, pointed one pudgy finger at the picture.

"The young guy here is the kid; his pal, this older-lookin' bloke, is the phoney drummer who sold me last year's supply of cards."

"You mean that the old boy sold you marked cards and the young one, the kid, followed him and ——"

"You're a good guesser, young fellow," Tim replied, and then, lighting another cigar, asked, "What'll you drink — to the kid?"

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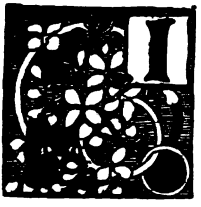
The Dragon's Fang.*

BY J. CLARKSON MILLER.



HAVE several reasons for confiding to paper the account of an experience with which, I believe, no other man in this day and age has met. In the first place, I realize that I am a marked man — that at any moment the end may come — and that unless I myself tell the tale no one will ever know the real cause of my death. Then, too, I can think of nothing else — the scenes of this terrible drama are being constantly re-enacted before me, so that the writing down of an account of the original performance seems to lift, to some extent, the great weight from my mind. And in the third place, I believe it will make an interesting story to any one who may come to read it, in spite of my poor ability in the telling. I am, of course, more accustomed to repeating the words of some one else than to writing my own lines — still I believe that the inherent interest of my story will overcome the defects in the telling of it.

With this prologue, or apology, whichever you may choose to call it, let me tell my story as simply as possible. I do not ask the reader to accept it, although every word is as true as truth; I only ask that I at least be given the credit of believing it myself and of having no intention to deceive.

First, let me introduce myself: I am Trevor Morlaine, an actor, and like most of my profession am possessed of a very erratic temperament, which has caused me many minutes of the most intense mental suffering. Since childhood I have been subject to attacks of what is commonly known as "the blues," during which I suffer all the tortures of a lost soul. I am fully aware of my eccentric nature — no one more so than I myself — and I have tried to overcome it, but in vain!

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Moreover, for the past few years I have been strongly addicted to the use of opium and cocaine, consuming large quantities of these drugs. How I acquired this habit is of no consequence here — suffice it to say that I have been subject to it for some time — I offer no apology because of it.

Some time after beginning the habitual use of opium, which followed the acquisition of the cocaine habit, I became possessed of a peculiar hobby in the shape of a mania for things Chinese. I haunted curio shops and bazaars, buying enormous quantities of Chinese wares, pottery, brasswork and the like. I spent hours poring over books of Chinese history, legends and customs — I even began the study of the Chinese language, under the tutorship of the proprietor of my favorite opium parlor. I can offer no explanation for this strange mania. It came upon me suddenly, like an attack of fever, and feverishly I followed its dictates. Indeed, I became so engrossed in my studies and researches that I almost forgot my craving for drugs, entirely losing my desire for cocaine and consuming only a small quantity of opium.

During all this time I was rehearsing my new play, a four-act drama called "The Net." In the company selected to support me in this piece was a very beautiful young lady, Miss Shiela Carden, who was cast for the ingénue rôle. Strangely enough, I soon became very much infatuated with Miss Carden, who in her sweet, childish manner had from the first confided to me her hopes, her ambitions and her heart-aches. Realizing my utter unworthiness of her, I am proud to say that I kept my passion locked within my heart. I treated her as a parent might treat a child, for she was truly a child in innocence — and almost one in years.

We began our season late, the first performance being put on in early October. The piece proved to be very successful, both critics and public were kind, and we played nightly to crowded houses. In spite of the fact that it was her first appearance on the professional stage, Shiela at once bounded into popularity. Her beauty, winsomeness and naïveté, brought her audiences to her feet, and the name of Shiela Carden appeared far oftener in the newspaper accounts of the play than that of Trevor Morlaine, in spite of the fact that I was, theoretically at least, the star. I,

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however, far from feeling professional jealousy, rejoiced in her success; — I was prouder of it than I had ever been of my own.

After the piece had settled down for its all-winter run, I became more and more engrossed in my pursuit of things Chinese. I even neglected Shiela, for several weeks seeing her only at performances. In the meantime an event, seemingly harmless enough, took place, which is the cause of this chronicle. A well known millionaire clubman, whom I shall call Herbert Hammond, came, saw and was conquered. That is to say he came to a performance of "The Net," and fell deeply in love with Shiela. He contrived to meet her through mutual friends and immediately became a constant worshipper at her shrine. All this took place before I became aware that Hammond, whom I knew slightly, had even met Shiela.

When I found that out I was both glad and sorry — glad because I knew Hammond to be a fine young fellow, a man in the fullest sense of the word, and sorry because I was afraid of losing Shiela. Not that I had the slightest intention of offering myself to her, but I knew that her marriage with Hammond would take her into a world different from mine.

Several days after I became aware of the situation, I was sitting in my dressing-room smoking a cigarette and waiting for my entrance cue in the first act. I had come to the theatre early that evening; there still remained several minutes before orchestra call, when a light knock sounded at my door.

"Come in," I called. The door opened and Shiela's pretty face was thrust in. I can close my eyes now and see her as she appeared at that moment. Dainty, petite, she did not look the eighteen years she owned. Her pretty, childish face flushed, her great brown eyes were as smiling, as were her full red lips, and her glorious hair, coiled and twisted, gleamed like polished bronze in the dim light.

She came in and threw her slender figure into a chair facing mine. I looked at her closely and thought of Hammond. What a stunning couple they would make! She with her childish womanliness, winsome manner and fresh beauty; he with his noble manhood. And yet I hated to think of it because —

Shiela was speaking.

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"Dear old Trek," she said, calling me by the name she had invented for me, "I came to tell you something before any one else knows of it. Listen, Trek," and her eyes brightened, "I am engaged!" She looked at me expectantly, happiness beaming in her face. I said nothing for a moment — could say nothing.

Finally, "It's Hammond?" I asked.

"Yes," and then when I said nothing further, "but you don't seem a bit glad or surprised or anything. I thought you would be glad with me, Trek. Aren't you pleased?"

"Yes, of course," I managed to say, "of course I am, little girl, but you completely took me off my feet by your sudden way of breaking the news to me."

She laughed.

"You are very happy, aren't you?" I asked myself rather than her. She nodded and I reached and took her little gloved hand.

"Then let me congratulate both of you," I said, "for I can't see how either of you could have done better. I hope I may see Hammond tonight and congratulate him personally. You will leave the company at once?"

"No," she said, "Bert has been called south on business and I am going to stay with the play until he comes back. Mr. Delft will have a girl here to watch me in the part so that I can leave as soon as he returns. I must let her have a chance to learn the lines at least. And besides," here she sighed ever so slightly, "I don't want to break off here so quickly. Everybody has been so nice to me here, the manager, the people, the audiences and everybody. I've learned to love the place — why I even know 'props' and every 'grip' by name. And you, Trek, you have been so good to me. I don't know what I am going to do without my 'big brother.'"

"But I may come and see you sometimes?"

"Of course. Any and all times — but it won't be the same. Do you remember," she asked, "do you remember during rehearsals how you comforted me when I thought I was doing everything wrong; how you taught me little tricks of the trade, how to laugh and cry, how to look frightened or happy or sad; even how to put on my make-up?"

Did I remember? *Don't* I remember yet? If I should live a

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million years every word that passed between us would be remembered to the end.

"Of course," I said; "but with a less apt pupil ——"

"No flattery," she laughed; "leave that to lovers. But I must hurry — orchestra's called."

"Shiela," I had to watch my voice to keep it from trembling, "you will lunch with me to-night?"

"Surely." She rose to go, but stopped. "I have something to show you that will interest you — something very, very wonderful," she added, and, with a bright little nod, was gone.

After the performance Shiela and I went to a little Chinese restaurant, a favorite haunt of theatrical folk, and seated ourselves in a little curtained booth. It was a wonderful place — this of Ching Chu's — Oriental, ancient and mysterious. Our booth was walled in by hangings of the richest purple Chinese silk, embroidered with dragons and serpents and strange birds and beasts of outlandish shapes and colors. The tables were of bamboo, the service of delicate silver and hammered brass, with tiny dishes and cups of the rarest and most exquisitely painted china. Above our heads hung a brazier in which a delicate incense smoked, filling the room with a pungent perfume. Great paper lanterns flooded the booth with soft colored light.

I tapped on a little muffled gong that stood on the table and almost instantly Wu, the head-waiter, appeared, clad in glistening silk and satin. I gave him our order and as he slipped noiselessly out I turned to look at Shiela. How beautiful she was in the soft light of the swinging lanterns! Never before had her great eyes beamed with such velvety softness — never before had her delicately tinted face glowed with such a spiritual light. I felt the hot blood leap in my veins, I became almost mad with the desire to crush her in my arms, a dizziness blinded me and the blue smoke of the incense burned in my nostrils.

She was speaking.

"I told you I had something to show you, Trek," she was saying, "and this is just the place to show it. It goes so well with the setting," and as she spoke she drew from her waist a small, flat box of morocco leather and handed it to me.

"Open it," she said.

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I took the box, looked at it, and pressed the catch. The box flew open. The sight of its contents almost stopped my breath. There, lying in the black velvet lining, was the most wonderful pearl I had ever seen. It was almost as big as a pigeon's egg, dazzlingly white on its black background, yet sparkling with an opalescent glow I have never before or since known a pearl to possess. It was shaped like the canine tooth of some great beast, broad at the base and tapering to a blunt point in a regular curve. I stared at it in speechless wonder.

"What do you think of it?" asked Shiela.

"It is wonderful," I gasped, "wonderful."

For some time we both sat in silence, eyes fixed on the radiant jewel. The pungent odor of the burning incense seemed to grow stronger and stronger, the dull light seemed to grow more and more soft and weird. My nerves became gradually strung tighter and tighter until it seemed that something must give way under the tension.

When I finally raised my eyes I looked squarely into those of Wu, the waiter, which were staring like two great black beads, opened so wide as to almost overcome the Mongolian slant. His thick lips were parted, his yellow face was pale so that it looked like the dead yellow-white of a cat-fish's belly, and his yellow forehead was wrinkled like an old parchment. When my eyes met his, his expression changed, or rather vanished, as his face re-assumed the expressionless calm of the Oriental. He came to the table, set down his steaming tray and silently glided between the curtains.

In spite of the fact that I myself had expressed as great astonishment, the expression on the Chinaman's face as he had gazed upon the great pearl worried me. I looked at Shiela. She was looking at the brazier above our heads, nervously tapping the paper-like edge of her saucer with a white forefinger.

"Where did you get this?" I asked.

"Bert gave it to me this afternoon," she replied. "He said he bought it of an old Chinaman who seemed anxious to get rid of it. The old fellow hinted that it was sacred to some horrible god in his own country, Bert said. Somehow it frightens me," she added shivering, "but I cannot keep from looking at it. It

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fascinates me like the eyes of a snake. But of course I am foolish. It can't be anything but a mere pearl — a very peculiar one, of course, but still only a stone. And yet ——" here she hesitated.

"Let me look at it closer," I said, as I took it in my fingers. I examined it carefully. Around the base there seemed to be a series of minute indentations, like scratches, marring the otherwise smooth surface. I took from my waistcoat pocket a powerful lens which I always carried, and held it over the pearl. The scratches formed themselves into characters under the powerful influence of the lens. My studies of the Chinese language enabled me to read:

The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death. Guard thy throat.

I could feel Shiela's hot breath on my face as she leaned forward to look through the lens.

"Why, there are letters on it," she cried. "Can you read them?"

"No," I lied, "I cannot read them." I restored the lens to my pocket, the pearl to its case. The curtains parted and Wu stole in.

"Pardon, sir," he said in his excellent English, "but I have brought fresh tea." He set down the little brass pot on the table and left. I poured for Shiela and myself, lit a cigarette and sat there looking at her. The delicate aroma of the cigarette blended with pungent smoke of incense as we sipped the steaming tea. Neither of us spoke. Shiela's face reflected the look of nervous tension I knew my own must be wearing. A brass gong struck softly somewhere in the place and the incense from the brazier floated down to our nostrils, borne on some unseen current of heavy air.

By the intense quiet which prevailed I knew that we must be the only patrons left in the place. The light grew dimmer and dimmer and the smell of the incense more and more powerful. I felt a strange, inexplicable terror creeping over me, coupled with a feeling of weakness in every muscle of my body. My eyes became heavy, my throat contracted, my head began to roar like the beating of a million waves upon the sands. I tried to shout for Wu, but no sound came. I heard the thud of a fall, and by

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a great effort I opened my eyes and saw that Shiela had fallen from her chair. I tried to rise, but could not, my eyes grew heavier and heavier, the choking sensation became stronger and stronger until I felt myself falling, falling, and heard a great crash. Then I knew no more.

When I came to my senses I looked about for Shiela. She was gone. There on the floor lay her hat and jacket in a heap; nearby was the morocco case that had held the pearl — the jewel itself was gone.

I rose to my feet and staggered through the curtains into the open room of the restaurant. Everything was as still as death, no one was near. At the back of the long hall-like room I saw a little door, and in front of it on the floor lay one of Shiela's gloves. I rushed down the hall, through the curtained door into a closet-like enclosure lined with tufted silk and lighted by a glowing red paper lantern. There, upon a silken couch, was something covered with a counterpane of purple satin on which was embroidered, in green and red, a great dragon, with only one tooth, which glowed like living fire. Beneath this figure were some Chinese characters in black. I read:

The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death. Guard thy throat.

I tore back the satin sheet. Beneath it, with an expression of the most ghastly terror on her white face, great eyes staring at the ceiling, lay Shiela. The lace about her throat was torn into shreds, and on the delicate flesh was a purple mark, shaped like the tooth of a great beast.

I could feel my hair rise on my head, my flesh crept and I screamed like a woman with the horror of it all. Shrieking like a maniac, I turned and ran until I found myself in the street. I found a police station and with half a dozen officers retraced my steps to the restaurant. It seemed that we would never get there. I urged my escort on until they panted like dogs in August. We crept cautiously up the narrow stairs and into the largest room of the place, but no one was there. The lights were low and dull, some had burned entirely out. We rushed back to the closet in the rear, but Shiela's body was gone. Ching-Chu and Wu have never been located, Shiela's body has never been found,

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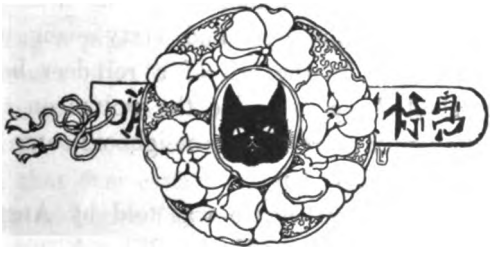
and the great pearl has vanished utterly. A few days ago I received through the mail a note, written in Chinese characters, reading:

The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death. Guard thy throat.

I know that I am marked. I know that I am to follow Shiela as a sacrifice to the great Chung-Li; and yet I do not fear. In the great beyond there will be no unworthiness, no love unrequited or unsatisfied, no lives wasted. I am waiting calmly for the time when I, like her, shall feel the fire of the dragon's fang.

. . . . . .

Several months ago quite a stir was created by the peculiar death of Trevor Morlaine, a talented actor, in an apartment house in New York. At the morgue it was noticed that his throat bore a peculiar mark, shaped like the tooth of a great beast, and in color a deep purple. His death was ascribed by the coroner to heart-failure caused by the excessive use of drugs, but several weeks later the foregoing manuscript was found among some old papers in his desk.



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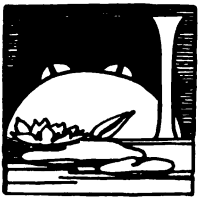
The Out-Lying of Hector.*

BY ALEX. GARDINER.



HAVE read a lot of stories about lumberjacks around in Maine and Canada and such places, but I've always logged in the big timber, and it's different here — judging from the stories. They are always fighting in those stories. We are not peaceable — being a light-hearted class of people — but we pull off our trouble around the saloons. I've only seen one little or'nary fight in camp, and the outfits I've earned money from are strung from Kalispel to Puget's Sound.

But we certainly had contests in the shack where I bunked at Floyd and Callahan's Camp Four. The shack held twenty bunks, and about half of them harbored average good liars — good liars, but not convincing. They lied only for pastime. But Hector Tretheney, the blacksmith (Uncle Heck, we called him), he was the main liar — he was convincing — you just had to believe him. When he talked, we just sat and watched his beard move, for he was a big, old man, and he had a big beard.

Why! one night he calmly told us how he was chased across Lake Michigan by a hundred and sixty-seven wolves — him a-skating and hanging to the tail of a reindeer he had tamed. The deer was shod sharp so he led the wolves on to some glare ice and skated around there till the neighbors came out and shot them all. And we believed it!

But the story I am getting to was told by Angus Latouche, and Angus was different from Heck. Why, he was the quietest man in the other ten bunks. A little, young man — sociable, but it was like falling a fir with a hand-saw to get him to talk about himself. He had been around too, in the States and in Canada, where he was raised. Then he had been through the

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Boer War with the Canada soldiers. He must have *had* conversation stored up in his system.

I suppose his big story was the rule-proving exception, but you can judge.

It came up this way: Heck's lie reminded some one of fishing through the ice, leading around finally to remarks on the thickness and weight of the rainbow trout in the creek above the falls. Heck said he had caught one only six inches long, but it weighed a pound. He said he remembered the time because coming back over Mule Ridge he was followed by a cougar. It never tackled him, but he saw it thirty-one and a half times, going a mile. Then it quit as it came. Heck said he was pretty scared.

Angus was playing pedro, quiet, with Shorts McGee and some others, but now he looks up. He says, casual like:

"What did you say was the diameter of that fish, Heck?"

"I said it was six inches long," said Heck, and he says it kind of testy.

"Well, by Gawd!" says Angus.

It surprised me to hear him jump the old man about a fish. Angus was great to hunt and had shot all kinds of fur-bearing animals, from polar-bears to Boers — but fish?

Still, I didn't think of a yarn from him. I might have. He gets through his game, then throws down his cigarette and commences filling a pipe. Angus is a cigarette smoker — mostly — and you know a pipe is a handier smoke for a yarn.

Well, Angus lit up, then he says: "By Gawd! that was a big fish for his size, but I was there at the catchin' of the biggest, fattest fish that ever came out of a wet place."

I have to apologize for that "By Gawd" of Angus'. I'd put in something milder, if I knew anything serviceable that would be milder. But he says it unconscious, he don't *mean* any harm by it, and as I couldn't make up a story, I have to tell it the way he did.

He goes on: "Was any of you in Seattle the year of the Chicago World's Fair?"

No one pleads guilty — we were all out from the East since that time—except Ike Borst, and he was a baby that far back,

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and of course he was bashful now about not being properly grown up.

"Well, by Gawd, I was!" says Angus, very positive. "I come there in the spring of ninety-one, me and Nels Jorgensen —that was his name, but they called him George. We started pardners up in the Coeur d'Alenes; he was a good Swede.

"We was loggin' Snohomish way, but the camp shut down, so we was out of a job.

"George, he was quite a mechanic; before we could get our money spent he run across a busted-up launch on Lake Washington there. It was cheap and he got me to put up half the money for it.

"Well, I sobered up, and here I was a sea-captain, by Gawd! I was hostile at first, but George tinkered her up, and we done well, takin' out picnic parties and odd haulin's. We batched in a shack at Meydenbauer Bay — got it free for mendin' the roof.

"Of course there was some dull times, and we hunted and trapped. One day we took my Winchester and starts up the lake a ways where we'd heard pheasants drummin', off in the woods.

"She was a kind of a showery mornin' and I set up in the bow considerin' whether may be it was too wet for pheasants to drum, George he was foolin' at his engine. Well, we was close into a brushy point where there's deep water. I seen a mushrat swimmin' for the point, so I grabs the rifle — just for the shot.

"You know how a big trout takes a fly — just comes up easy, and you wouldn't know he was big if you didn't know a little one'd make a splash — like folks. Well, while I was holdin' on that rat, figurin' how much to lead him, the rat disappears — just goes. It was funny.

"I looks, then I looks at George. 'By Gawd!' I says — just like that — 'By Gawd!' It surprised me.

"George says a fish took him.

"'What kind of a fish is in this lake that can down mushrats like a trout with a buffalo-gnat?' that's what I asks George.

"He says it was a fish all right. George didn't have no imagination — he believed what he seen — and by Gawd, he was right!

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"I had an idea. I heard squirrels a-squtterin' off in the woods, and I figured what rose to a mushrat would maybe rise to a squirrel.

"There was two, but one of 'em was only wounded — I was too excited to shoot good — it runs all around and bites George's thumb. George scarcely notices — we was both excited — but we kep' it alive so it would swim and look natural.

"We steamed back where the rat disappeared at, and I thrown out my squirrel as far as I could. Sure enough, the fish took it. It bobbed for a minute, till we commenced thinkin' nothing was comin' off; then up comes our fish, takes a look, and goes down — acted just like a trout, leary but wantin' the bait. Like a trout, too, he was scarcely gone when he was back — on the rush, and this time he took the squirrel. Then George thrown in the live one—closer to the boat than I did mine, but the fish nailed him before he wiggled a foot.

"This time we got a notion of that fish. He got scared quick as he took the meat, turned like a flash — down and out into the lake; and as he turned we glimpsed the white of his belly for his whole length.

"Well, sir, by Gawd! right then we commenced figurin' how to catch that fish — figurin' that and what kind of fish he was and how come he there.

"At first we wanted to catch him just to be a-catchin' him, but then George said maybe his meat would sell. That got me thinkin' we could likely sell him to a museum or something, and George, he thought so too.

"We went out every day and fed him rabbits and woodrats till he follered the boat for 'em, but if we made a sudden move away he went to the place we seen him at first. That was his hangin' out place.

"There was holes up that end of the lake where no one'd found bottom, so we sized it up there was no bottom there and he'd come up from below, some place. The reason we thought that was a book we read that was wrote by a Frenchman. It told about some people that went down into the ground and found fish and animals there that was left over from early times.

"George said he didn't believe there was things alive so far

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down as the book said, but maybe there was lakes down a ways that held fish like ours. You see this fish was different from anything we knowed, except a trout; and there he was as big as all the trout in the state.

"Well, we had him located, and we was for catchin' him before others seen him and fished for him till he wouldn't bite. So while we got him tamed up we was framin' our tackle, decidin' on a shark hook and a line of lariats — they had strength without being thick.

"We rigged our line to the stern, good and solid, intendin' to drag the bait with the boat just movin'; then when we got a bite we could jam on speed and jerk him. A steam launch would be an awkward reel — we knowed that — but George thought he could play him without capsizin', and I was willin' to risk it.

"We wasn't troubled gettin' a bite; that fish took our rabbit bait like he was as anxious as we was. I was doin' signalman. I hollers as soon as I seen he had the hook, and George thrown in the speed. I had a tight holt for big disasters; there wasn't none, the old launch fetched up kind o' sudden, but she started again as quick, and in comes our line. The hook had broke at the barb, and we was alone.

"At first we was disappointed, but we went back at sundown and throwed out some vermin. The fish was there, and he et 'em all, so we felt encouraged.

"Next day we got a new hook, lookin' careful for flaws, and goes over to the point. John L. (We named him that because he was strong) he took all our bait but the chunk on the hook. He favored a trout in all his ways.

"So we trout-fished for him — we went after him at daybreak when the foxiest trout is apt to take a chance. And the rule held good.

"He bit eager; and this time our tackle held till he dragged us fifty foot out into the lake; then he started for bottom, or whatever there was down there. The launch follered stern-first and nose in the air. I was going to jump personally, but the hook came out and we righted. Didn't happen to have him hooked solid — and a lucky happen-so.

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"We took stock of the boat — only waterlogged and generally shook up — but we felt down-hearted. We seen our plant was too light for such heavy draggin's, but we was too busy swearin' to see a row boat come up till it was right close.

"This was McCormack in the boat. He is important in this fishin' because we took him partner.

"It was this way! He starts out askin' us what in Hell had we caught or had caught us? Seein' he was fixed for guessin', I told him. I wanted to keep to ourselves what fun and money was in sight, but I seen now we had to have capital. I happened to know McCormack had money and a donkey-engine, so his occurrence seemed providential. I liked his looks too, and I told him all about John L. By Gawd! I had to do the talkin'. George was occupied sayin' silence in sign-language. He was a distrustful Swede.

"We got together from the start, for McCormack took a real interest in John L. Of course I had to talk to George private — this was after we all was at the shack. Then we held a general session. McCormack offered to put the financin' against our rights of discovery and divide the proceeds even, so it was agreed that way, and we shook hands on it. He said our idea of gettin' the fish before we made any move to sell him was business, but he had a better scheme for a market. He knew some Seattle men on the Fair Exhibit Commission, and thought we could sell to the State. George and me was in for that.

"McCormack was for getting John into a tank alive, but when he went out and seen him rise for his breakfast he agreed that he was over husky to take chances on hivin' him. So we framed up to get a donkey from Mack's camp and bait and hook him as before, only with a steel line and the donkey on shore instead of the launch a-floatin'. Then we could give him line if he took it strong, but the first in-rush he made we would wind him right up into the woods. Mack got a special hook made too — out of a swamp-hook. It would have held a battleship.

"George and me herded the fish, while Mack got his donkey shipped.

"We thought we could keep the whole thing dark, but the day Mack got back there was a newspaper scare about a sea-serpent

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in Lake Washington. They treated it as a joke, but we read John L. for sea-serpent, and we didn't laugh.

"By Gawd, we was leary! Mack had to arrange for right o'way to get his engine from the railroad to the lakeside; that aroused curiosity. Then George has to go to town and hit up the booze. Naturally he made some brags around. Oh, nothing much! but we was nervous. We certainly didn't want no crowd around when we undertook to hoss John L. up into the timber.

"We needn't have been scared. Everything went perfect, like it was on the stage, even the weather,— a clear dawn after a wet night, and John's habits so far as known was trout habits.

"And the way we caught that fish, when we had things right, was so easy we was ashamed. Mack was runnin' the donkey, which was set up a skid road about fifty yards. There was nine hundred foot of half-inch line on the drum, so we could have our bait out a hundred and fifty yards and leave some line in case John proved stronger than the donkey on the first rush — we wasn't under-estimatin' him none. The bait was a woodrat — we had found he liked that best of what we could offer — and we put a small float to keep it up, runnin' the line over drift shingle-bolts for the same purpose.

"George and me made them arrangements while day was breakin'. As soon as it was good and light, out we goes to coax in our fish. We done it at the expense of two rabbits and a gray tom-cat George had shot some place.

"John, he comes in, zigzaggin' after the critters quick and easy; it was pretty to see, only I thought of that since. By when he took the cat, which we thrown out last, you could see every move he made though he was hid by the dark water. It was deep there, but he almost dragged bottom. He rose to the cat about twenty yards to one side of the boat.

"I signals Mack, and he starts his engine up a little — just enough to move the bait and attract John's attention.

"George throws in full speed ahead at the same time, but we scarcely started when our fish bites. I signals Mack for the jerk and he puts on full engine speed too.

"By Gawd! John L. gives one jump, clear out of water — the whole length of him! The surf he thrown up almost ship-

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wrecked us. When he hits the water he hits it with his nose pointed for shore at a thirty degree angle to the line — see? And he makes his rush the way he was pointed.

"Mack takes this in, so he keeps her a-windin' full speed, and John comes round in a semi-circle to the shore below the donkey. He comes mostly on his own power, but the point is he comes. Before we got the launch through half the white water he kicks up, he was high and dry and had demolished a half-acre of huckleberry brush. There he come off the hook, quick as he got an inch of slack, and swung crossways behind some trees.

"I yells to Mack to shoot him for Gawd's sake; I was scared he would make it back into the lake. Mack couldn't hear me, but he has the same idea. He grabs up my Winchester and pumps it empty into poor old John L.

"By when George and me got to the wreck he had made of them woods, he was only wrigglin' his fins — just a-quiverin' 'em.

"Personally I was as tickled as a snake with a new skin; I guess the others felt the same way. We shook all round and sized up our prey. He was marked like a Dolly Varden trout, and he was sure long, but he was like Heck's trout — it was his chest measurement that told the tale, for he was built like a humpy salmon might be if one got to be that big.

"But them points was scarcely realized when we hears a whistle and here comes a steamer, standin' in to where we was. They was on their early trip and seen the flash of John's belly when he jumped clear. So we had spectators from that time. Before noon, half Seattle was over there.

"He was a bigger fish than we'd had any idea of — the more we looked the bigger he got. And he come in for plenty of notice. A fish professor put a long name to him, but I always think of him as John L.

"Mack, he sold him to the State, the way we aimed, but he got a longer price than I expected — let alone George. My share would have give me a start if I'd took care of it. Yes, sir, by Gawd!"

And Angus went back to his bunk and made him a cigarette.

I have left out the interruptions in this story, but there were mighty few and none from Heck. He listened to Angus close,

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which was different from his custom with any one. Every time Angus hinted how big his fish was, Heck sat right up, and he seemed disappointed too when no figures was given.

He wasn't the only one that wanted statistics. When Angus finished, there was a general question chorus: "What'd he weigh?" "How long?" "Didn't yuh measure him?"

Angus stooped to get a fresh sack of "Durham", and his face was in the shadow.

"We didn't weigh him accurate," he said, "but when we pulled him out it lowered the lake three feet."

"I believe that's a lie!" yells Uncle Heck and walks right out of the bunkhouse.

"Well!" says Angus to me, "well, by Gawd!"

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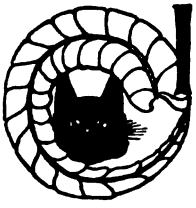
The Blue Shirt of Tauolo.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.



IF it were possible to construct a chart showing the distance between heaven and the more thickly populated parts of the earth's surface, the East End of London would hold the long-distance record. This assertion is built on the props of truth which defy contradictions. The distance between Spitalfields and salvation is painful for the pious to contemplate.

With this knowledge in one's mind, it is difficult to understand why missionaries pass over such a tract when searching for suitable fields of labor. But missionaries steer clear of the East End. Mindanao, Timbuctoo, Pingelap, Banjermassin, and ten thousand other spots on the world's rim, call them with a voice that is soft and insistent, and they go forth to the naked one with enthusiasm in their hearts, and a tract-stuffed portmanteau in their hands. Somebody once remarked that "Distance lends enchantment to the view," and there is good reason to believe that person was a missionary.

This is a story of retribution. It is the story of the Reverend Gideon Plumlop and a shirt. A shirt is a peculiar garment to bracket with a missionary, but Fate has an eye for the importance of little things, and often chooses an insignificant object with which to perform great deeds. And this shirt was, if one might judge it by its price, an insignificant shirt. It had been purchased at Goldberg's on the Mile End Road for the sum of ninepence halfpenny — just nineteen cents in American money.

The Reverend Gideon Plumlop was born in Shandy Street near the East London cemetery, and he was born poor. This was unfortunate. The influence of poverty is bad when it makes the poverty-stricken ashamed of being poor. And Gideon was much

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ashamed. The poverty of his parents annoyed him, and from his earliest childhood he detested Shandy Street and its horrible environments. While quite a child he endeavored to make people believe that he walked barefooted because he disliked boots, and at ten he had earned the reputation of a snob.

But Gideon was lucky. He was a saintly snob, and a wealthy lady from Belgravia who went "slumming" in search of excitement for her jaded nerves, took an interest in him, and she provided the funds to train him for the ministry. But he remained a snob.

When Plumlop became a fully qualified spiritual guide one would have thought he would have returned to labor in Shandy Street where his parents still lived. He knew well that the percentage of souls that enter heaven and register from Whitechapel is lower than that from any other quarter of the globe, but he put the knowledge from him. The odors of the East End stirred painful memories. He remembered the barefooted days, and in his dreams he pictured himself spreading the word to the undressed inhabitants of the South Sea.

And Gideon's dreams came true. The Foreign Missionary Association was at that time much concerned about the nude person in the Pacific, and Plumlop received an appointment at Pualala, an outlying island of the Gilbert Group. Here, one hundred and seven souls, to use the expression of the Bishop of Melanesia, "wallowed in their ungodliness," and Gideon got busy.

His success was remarkable. It was unique. Whether it was that the inhabitants of Pualala were in that stage of artistic expectancy when a change of any old kind is welcomed, or whether Gideon's oratory was more than usually convincing, is not known, but within four months of his landing he had converted fifty. Amongst this half hundred was Tauolo, the headman, and although their knowledge of Christianity was elemental, Plumlop ceaselessly drummed at them in spite of the taunts of the fifty-six scoffers.

It was at the end of the four months that Fate introduced the shirt. The Bishop of Melanesia contemplated a long tour of his scattered diocese, and the Reverend Gideon Plumlop was determined that his half hundred would look as saintly as possible in

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the eyes of the Bishop. In his opinion uncovered limbs gave a person an irreligious appearance, and as the bishop would not reach Pualala for many months, Gideon wrote a letter to his mother in Shandy Street asking her to collect cast-off clothing for his converts.

It was then that Mrs. Plumlop found the shirt. The order to collect clothes for her son's colored congregation so disturbed the poor woman that, with tears in her eyes, she confided her troubles to the proprietress of a boarding house near by, and, quite unexpectedly, received comfort. A boarder had died at the friend's house, and although the doctor, doubtful of the nature of the illness, had given the landlady an order to destroy the clothing of the deceased, Mrs. Plumlop's grief so moved her that she contributed them to the heathen instead. In the bundle was the blue shirt, and Mrs. Plumlop was happy as she sent it forth to her son in the South Sea.

Tauolo, the headman, received the shirt. Its color attracted him immensely, and when Plumlop invested him with the article, he exhibited more pride than a shopgirl who is the possessor of the latest style hat. When the other articles were distributed, the contented missionary sat down to await the arrival of the bishop.

But Nemesis was charging down at full speed upon the Reverend Gideon Plumlop. Ten days after Tauolo received the shirt he sickened and died. His two wives followed him. His five brothers, six uncles, and eleven cousins, who, through living in the same hut, had come in contact with the blue shirt, went next. The missionary was astounded. One after the other his fifty converts were stricken with the mysterious disease that killed Tauolo, and in a month he was alone with the naked scoffers who, luckily for themselves, received no gifts from the parcel that came from Shandy Street.

But the scoffers were now clothed in righteous rage. Many of their relatives were amongst the dead, and they execrated Plumlop and shook their spears at the mission hut. All through the day they held loud pow-wows to decide what they should do, and on the third day after the death of the last convert, they bore down in a body on the hut, and Gideon entrenched himself inside.

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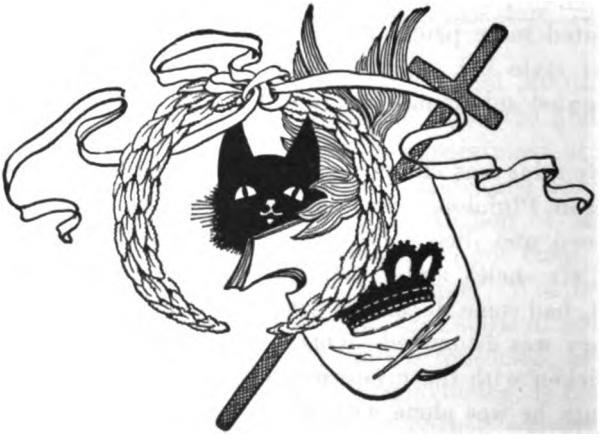
Five months afterwards, the Bishop of Melanesia, speaking at Auckland, told the story of the martyrdom of the Reverend Gideon Plumlop of Pualala, and his audience wept as the bishop told how he himself had removed from the head of the dead martyr an old blue shirt which the good man's mother had sent out from London to clothe the heathen. But the bishop was lucky. He had not reached Pualala till four weeks after Gideon's death, and the disease germs in the blue shirt had succumbed to the sweet breezes of the Pacific.



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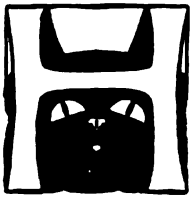
The One Phobia.*

BY HARRIS MERTON LYON.



E went to bed that night in a preoccupied fashion, thinking of a conversation he had had at the club with a well-known expert in nervous diseases. Of all the thousand phobias to which the brain is heir, his mind dwelt upon but one, and dwelt upon that one insistently—hypsophobia; and the reason for this was that it was his one greatest fear, this dread of high places, this fear of looking down from a lofty height. To him a steeplejack was the most marvelous phenomenon in animate creation. It was terrifying at times, this horror he had. He could not, in walking across a bridge, look down at the water without becoming dizzy, without wishing to throw himself into the stream beneath. He could not ride upwards in an elevator without becoming faint at thought of the height to which he had ascended. He was afraid to stand out upon a fire escape, he did not dare to look out of a fourth story window upon the street below. There was always a haunting consciousness within him that he would involuntarily let himself fall out of the window.

Tonight he had listened to the physician's idle, yet interesting, chat without revealing this weakness of his own, and had followed with caught breath the detailing of symptom after symptom identical with those which he himself experienced. With these things in his mind he went to bed.

. . . . . .

When he awoke it was broad day and the sky was overcast with a garish green light such as the light which precedes a storm or a hurricane. He himself felt decidedly nervous and queer, as if laboring under a strange tension, but this he attributed to the atmospheric conditions about him; possibly, also the eye-strain of

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which he frequently complained had something to do with this present light-headedness. He remembered to have drunk a large pot of coffee the night before; the caffeine would be sure to affect him thus. And yet — was his condition really due to these outward, evident causes? There seemed to be more than that to affect him. There seemed to be an impulse subtly at work, straining at his will, trying to lure him, to draw him somewhere. What was it? He did not greet the morning as a man refreshed by sound sleep. He tried to think: Had he dreamed any ghastly dream during the night which would still influence him, which would pursue him even into his waking hours? Yes, he remembered that he had!

What had he dreamed? He struggled to get his wits together and consider the events of the past night. He found himself bathing his eyes in cold water in order to shock himself into clear-headedness; he pulled the stopper out of a camphor bottle, and let the penetrating odor bite its way into his befuddled brain; he remembered that he was mechanically dressing himself; he had the sensation of going through movement after movement of this sort, all the while vainly groping in his memory.

Of a sudden he stopped. "Great God," he said to himself, "I know now what it was!" He had dreamed, amid some awful, horrid setting, that he saw his body, his dead body, somewhere. It lay face downward, with the arms spread out. Yes, he recalled these items in the dream now, perfectly clearly. The rest was laborious work. What else had happened? Was there any other sensation? With the feeling of a peevish child, he realized that he could not think. All he knew was that he had dreamed he was dead; and that the nightmare pursued him even now, into the sickly light of a new day. He shuddered with uneasiness and looked about him apprehensively. The carpet, the chairs, the books — everything seemed strange; there was a wan, colorless, impalpable quality to each bit of familiar furniture, no doubt due to the pale light of the heavens. The hushed closeness of the place was sickening to his overwrought nerves. He felt that he must get out of there before he shrieked aloud. He could not bear the image of that dream-corpse before his mind's eye, ghastly, motionless, in sharp relief.

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Moreover, there was a steady, insistent, weirdly unpleasant attraction at work upon him, something impelling him to leave, drawing him as if by unseen threads, out of his room and down on to the street. Whither was it calling him? He felt it, but could not guess its meaning. He wondered vaguely what it was all about; he tried in vain to analyze his physical condition. Hyperæsthesia? Hysteria? He hardly thought so. It must be the weather. He started to ring for some coffee, and then bethought him that the beverage would only make things worse. He glided to the window and drew up the blind. He had never seen such a sky. It was flat, oppressive, and pale green in color, the color of sea water when a diver opens his eyes a fathom beneath the waves. There was no sun, no clouds. He glanced at his watch, but his troubled eyes could not distinguish whether it was eight o'clock or twenty minutes to twelve. More than likely, he concluded, it was twenty minutes to twelve. In that case he had slept exactly eight hours!

He marveled at the untrustworthiness of his eyes; a slight fog seemed to roll and tumble across the scope of his vision, and he mentally noted that he must have the orbs examined and adopt spectacles hereafter — a thing he had been intending to do ever since he first felt the strain upon them.

All the time, as he stood revolving these matters, he felt the vague impulse at work in him, the impulse which he could not fathom; it seemed like a gnawing at his brain.

With a gesture of impotent disgust at his own weakness this morning he turned his gaze again out the open window. Slowly he took in the old, familiar landmarks, the news stand on the corner, the grocery opposite, the gaudy cigar sign half a block down the street, the barber shop — and then! His brain swam giddily with a sense of surfeit. He had found the answer to the impulse!

A stone's throw from where he stood, looming gray and soft against the background of the monotonous sky, and seeming higher than the skies themselves, he espied a lofty office-building in the course of erection. Steel girders protruded two hundred feet or more into the air; three of the stone sides had already been set into place; on the fourth side a spider's web of scaffolding covered the entire wall, and at the highest point on this scaffold-work he saw

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a solid wooden platform such as workmen use as a support. It must be twelve feet square, yet from where he stood it seemed no larger than the top of his centre table. What it was that seized him and hurried him on he could never have told; a mad notion, perhaps, that he would satisfy this insistent craving, that he would quiet this nervous unrest, much as a wrecked drunkard seizes drink, as an opium fiend eats additional quantities of the drug. He snatched up his hat, burst out of the door, and ran.

Events thereafter raced past his mental vision with the swiftness of a cinematograph, quivering, fluttering, coming rapidly out of obscurity into the glare of his illuminating brain-heat. He seemed to move viciously in quick jerks, down the stairs, out on to the stale streets, past unheeding groups of people who stared at him like ghosts, into the building — had a delirium stolen into his blood this morning? — up ladder after ladder, triumphantly mounting, amazed at his own bravery. Where was his hypsophobia now? What would he do when he reached that platform? He did not know. He remembered every nail in that last ladder, and yet it seemed to him he had come up it as swiftly as if he had been shot out of a mortar. He looked back. No one was following him. He felt of his heart. It was beating at a fearful rate with hard, dry thumps against his ribs.

In a flash he was out upon the platform, his brow bared to the breeze, exultant, glorious in the high air. How clean it all was up there! He looked over toward his own room and laughed gaily. It seemed to him that he was a bird, soaring and swimming in the ether, rinsed by all the purity of the upper sky, free and joyous, sustained, swooping gently in great rings, up, up, up . . .

Suddenly he felt a blinding stroke across his eyes, a yawning at the pit of his stomach, something choking him like a ball or an apple lodged in his throat, and he caught himself leaning fascinated at the very edge of the planking. The reason of this was that his hat had fallen from his hand and in sickening little circles was drifting earthward. His nervous fingers clung to the trembling woodwork, he found himself unaccountably stretching up on tiptoe, he could not catch a breath while the black bit of headgear, with many a coil and spiral, let itself gently down. He tried to turn his eyes away and could not. The old fear had returned upon

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him. The blood fleeing from his skin, had left the sweat upon his brow as cold as the sweat upon a corpse. He no longer felt the first exhilaration, the uplift of his senses. A certain cowardice struck into the very marrow of his bones and left him dizzy and shaken before his impending fate.

All was changed. The gusts of wind, instead of bringing a sense of freedom, now roared about his ears so violently that they terrified him; he imagined he saw the scaffolding rock to and fro, and even felt the stone walls sway slightly beneath his hand. A great dread rushed over him that this breeze would blow him off of the platform. He looked rashly down and his eyes were blurred by the sight of a myriad of pigmy objects, human beings crawling about like ants, carriages and wagons appearing as tiny bugs or beetles, streets as ribbons, houses as little cardboard playthings.

The rapidity with which his mind worked seemed inconceivable. He paid scarcely any attention to the phenomenon, yet felt indistinctly that his brain was clicking off its pictures more swiftly than a camera's shutter, that each tiny scene was thrown out before him as a film, bitten by the developing fluid, flashes out its negative presentation.

Once more his stomach yawned; then all consciousness seemed to swoon. His thoughts swirled and reeled and swirled in a wild tumult; a mælstrom seemed sucking him in, and he felt seasick; vast noises roared through his head, as if his blood were congested there; red and green colors rotated before his eyes; his teeth were clenched together, and his tongue was dry; and always around and around in a tremendous mental whirlpool his thoughts spun and swung, spun and swung like a grotesque, irresponsible, crazy pendulum. His vibrating nerves had the sensation of cracked, twanging wires. His throat was completely stopped now by the round ball he had swallowed. Where had he swallowed it? He doubled up with fear, racking each tendon to its uttermost tautness. And then there was another change.

Far below him the pigmy people started coming up, sailing toward him in a great dream, growing larger and larger. The cabs left off their bug-like semblance and slowly grew into cabs; the ribbons became white streets. Things seemed metamorphosing as through ages of slow evolution. He was watching this with

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lulled senses when, in a terrible flash, he realized that he was falling!

It was *he* who was dropping toward the earth, *he* who had left the platform! His whole sequence of living flashed across his mind like one long, disjointed streak of lightning. Half-seconds seemed like millions of glorious, golden years, filled with the rarest passions, the most poignant pains. But above every other feeling loomed Fear like an awful god, eternal, relentless; the Fear that, siren-like, had lured him to the top of this tower, the Fear that had fascinated his eyes, the Fear that was now squeezing his body with an unendurable force. A great hand seemed to crush him, even as he fell. In mid-air he shrieked, shrieked with a long, spasmodic wail, and when his voice was at its highest his heart swelled in his bosom and snapped.

. . . . . .

The maid, on entering his room next morning, found the occupant prone on the floor, dead. His features were violently distorted and wrinkled almost beyond recognition. He had evidently fallen out of bed about midnight.

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Letter-Heads.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

HE advertisement appeared but once in the "Male Help Wanted" columns of a morning paper. It read:

> **SEVEN** small, neat, bald-headed men will be paid handsomely for a brief engagement. No soliciting. **BURKE**, room 427, Fox Bldg.

The elevator boy at the Fox Building was a colored lad, and his stove-polish grin gradually encroached upon his ears as he lifted cage after cage-full of neat little bald-headed men to the fourth floor. They came in such numbers that it would seem that every wife, mother or sister who had a neat little bald-headed man about the house had polished him up spick and span and sent him forth to answer the advertisement.

By noon of the following day the number fell off to an occasional applicant who would descend from the fourth floor looking greatly disappointed. The favored seven had been chosen and a notice to that effect posted on the door of room 427.

Two weeks later there appeared simultaneously in various sections of the city seven dapper little men, who no sooner removed their hats than there was disclosed to view a device more striking than the poet's classic "Excelsior." On the shining crown of each little man's bald head, written in a new growth of silky hair, were the words

ASK
ME

The public immediately became a smiling interrogation point, and it was learned from these human letter-heads that sometime during the following month there would be placed upon the market a hair-restorer warranted to grow hair on the stubbornest bald

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head in two weeks' time. The words "Ask Me" were material proof of the hair restorer's claims.

"Gentlemen, it is not merely an instance of 'heir expectant,' but an instance of 'heir apparent to the crown,' said one of the seven little men, who had developed into a wit under the exhilaration of a second growth of hair.

Men who had been bald for ten, twenty, some thirty years, and had long forgotten the price of a hairbrush, gazed into one another's eyes with dawning hope and encouragement, and the seven little men went about publishing the good news broadcast, wined and dined by an interested public.

Certain established manufacturers of proprietary hair medicines circulated the report that the human letter-heads were not, and had never been, bald, but that their heads had been shaved, leaving only the device, "Ask Me."

The seven little men hotly denied this aspersion upon their honor and their baldness, and the wittiest of them struck off a pamphlet entitled, "A Crown Seven Years Without a Heir," which sold like a baseball extra.

It was now that something unforeseen occurred. The discoverer and sole possessor of the marvelous hair-restorer was accidentally injured on the head by a falling mortar, and lost all recollection of his great secret. For better security he had told no one of the chemical formula of the restorative, and for the same reason he had not placed the formula in writing, and the seven little bald-headed men gasped when they learned the true state of affairs and realized the predicament in which they were placed.

They must now go through life with the device "Ask Me" written across their heads by nature's indelible hand, unless they possessed the courage to have it removed hair by hair by the electric needle, or — ignoble resort — shaved their heads frequently, like so many Chinamen.

One of their number — the wit — suddenly arose and left the room where they had gathered to discuss the situation. A few minutes later it was recalled that he had boasted of having in his possession a vial of the precious hair restorative, and his six friends arose and hurried after him.

But the wit had aroused his strapping wife and boys to the exi-

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gencies of the situation, and safely, behind barred doors, he coolly applied to his scalp a liberal quantity of the marvelous hair-producing fluid.

From his window he could see his late companions-in-advertisement gathered on the sidewalk looking wistfully and enviously at his door and he pitied them from the bottom of his heart. But there remained only sufficient restorative to grow one full head of hair, and if any one needed hair he did.

He rubbed into his scalp the precious drops of golden liquid and wiped his fingers on his chin.

"Friends can always be had," he meditated thoughtfully, "but hair once gone returns no more!"

One by one his late companions dispersed, as they realized the utter futility of protest or appeal under the circumstances, and the wit remained locked in his room for a week, at the end of which period he sallied forth with a luxurious growth of silky red hair, such as he had not possessed even as a boy.

But he found his friends lighter hearted and more forgiving than he had expected. They had discovered that by letting the device "Ask Me" grow to a good length it could be skilfully brushed and parted to represent a full head of hair, and this discovery had softened their hearts toward their more fortunate companion.

The discoverer of the formula is at the present time being tenderly watched and guarded by a secret league of bald-headed men, for his interest is also their interest, and in the words of the president of the league: "If memory should again re-light her extinguished torch in the mind of this genius, fame and fortune will find their way to his lodge, though it were in a trackless wilderness."

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The Haunted Pesos.*

BY FREDERICK FERDINAND MOORE.

TWO thousand Filipinos were standing in line before the window of the paymaster of the Army Transport Service, waiting to get their wages for the week, in bright new silver pesos.

"I hope," said Felipe Lopez, a cargo checker, "that none of my pesos will have the mark of blood on them. It is bad enough to work six days in the hot sun for twenty pesos, but after you get them it is worse to have the ghost of a miser running through your house trying to take them away from you, and probably kill you in the bargain."

Francisco Basa, a laborer, who was next to Lopez in the line, shivered and rolled a cigarette to steady his nerves.

"What is this about the haunted pesos?" he asked.

"What!" exclaimed Felipe, "have you not heard? All the Filipinos know the story. Have you not heard of the American miser who saved his silver pesos until he had a room full of them in a house in Paco? And how he was robbed and killed, and cursed the robber with his dying breath, and swore that every peso would have a drop of blood on it and that he would haunt every man who kept or used the money? Everybody knows of the story."

The natives near Felipe drew up to him with terror in their faces and asked about this awful story of the haunted pesos, for Filipinos are very superstitious and believe in ghosts and bad omens and evil eyes and curses.

"It is a very simple tale," said Felipe, when they pressed him to tell them about the haunted pesos. "There was an American who saved all the pesos he earned as a government engineer. He had his house half full of them out in Paco. It is the house

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where Ledesma, the Filipino patriot, lived before the war with the Americans, and you all know it. It has a yard and tall iron fence around it and no one lives there now, for the spirit of the miser haunts it. He has been seen walking through the grounds by night and no one dares go near it.

"Some American soldiers killed him and took the money. They cut his throat with a saber. As he was lying on the floor, dying, they filled sacks with the pesos. He cursed them as he was lying in his blood, and said that whoever should have a peso of his would be haunted. 'You will bring these pesos back here' he told them, 'and throw them into my yard by night. I will haunt you until you do it and then I will strangle you in your beds as you sleep. And any man who shall have one of these pesos and use it for his benefit in any way will have my curse, and unless he comes and throws the pesos into my yard, I will haunt him as long as he lives, and will strangle him and his wife and children. These pesos shall be known by a spot of my blood over the eagle. Sometimes it will not be there and sometimes it will be seen. When that spot of blood comes over the eagle on the peso, it is a warning, and unless it is thrown into my yard by night I will kill the man who keeps it or gives it in trade for goods for his household or food or drink for himself and children. This curse I put upon all who shall handle my pesos, and then he died, spitting blood at the robbers, which fell on the silver coins.

"Last week," continued Felipe, "I found two pesos in my pocket with the spot of blood on them. It was not there when I got the money, but the blood spots came out while it was in my pocket. I knew it was the miser's curse and warning, so that night I went to Paco and threw them into the yard of the house where the miser lived. They are there now, and whoever wants them may get them, unless the ghost of the miser has taken them away. I knew better than to use the money — I want no bony fingers at my throat in the night — I want to wake up in the morning. So you may save your lives and the lives of your wives and children if you heed my counsel. If you find some day that you have a haunted peso, I would advise you to throw it back to the miser.

"The robbers were all killed. The three of them were found

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dead, one after the other, and on their throats were the red marks where the fingers of the miser's ghost had strangled them, and their tongues were hanging out and their faces were blue and their eyes staring, as if they could see the spirit of the man they robbed. It all came to pass as he said it would. A Filipino was found last week in a town in Cavite, strangled in his bed. No one knew who had killed him. But a friend of mine told me that a peso with a spot of blood on it was found in his room. I said nothing, but of course it was a haunted peso, and that is why he died. Perhaps he did not know of the curse. But I do, and if I ever find another peso with the blood on it, I know where it will go. You may do as you choose, but I love my life too well to sell it for a peso."

The paymaster wondered why every man who was paid that day examined his pesos carefully before leaving the window. He supposed there were counterfeits in circulation and that the laborers were afraid of getting bad coins.

Francisco Basa, the man who had asked Felipe to tell him the story of the haunted pesos, looked at his money the next morning, and was horrified to discover that two of his pesos had the fatal blood spots.

He called his wife and in terror they both agreed that they were possessed of haunted pesos, and that they would hurl them into the yard of the Paco house as soon as it became dark. The two pesos were sadly needed, it was true, but what were two pesos, if throwing them back to the miser would protect them from his curse?

So after his day's work loading and unloading ships, Francisco went to Paco, shivering with fear, and imagining that every palm tree along Calle Real concealed the spirit of the miser, and that the terrible ghostly fingers were reaching for his throat.

There seemed to be a great many Filipinos hurrying along Calle Real. They all went by the Ledesma house in the darkness and then started back the way they had come from Manila.

Francisco furtively threw his pesos over the fence and went back to the city with the others. When he had come to the Lu-

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neta, where the band was playing, he met Pascual Romero, who also worked for the government unloading steamers.

"Where have you been, Pascual?" he asked.

"I have been in Paco," replied Pascual. "Let us walk around and hear the band play. How is your wife's brother doing with his fish store?"

"Good," replied Francisco, but his mind was not on the fish store.

"I found two haunted pesos in my purse this morning," said Francisco, his fingers trembling as he lit a cigarette.

"You were lucky," said Pascual, "I had the misfortune to find that I had four. I threw them back to the miser and glad I am that I did so. Have you kept yours?"

"Mother of God, no! I cast the accursed things away. Does a man risk his life for two pesos?"

"Others have found the blood spots on their money, I am told. There is no mistaking them. The spots show over the eagle. They are spots of dried blood and there can be no doubt that they are the miser's coins."

For three months the two thousand Filipinos employed by the government in the transport service found haunted pesos, and every week they journeyed to Paco by night and threw the coins into the yard of the Ledesma house. Then they found no more and came to the conclusion that the spirit of the dead miser had his own again and was at peace. They were well pleased, for they found their wages were being depleted by the tribute to the ghost of the pesos.

But no one had been strangled. So the story told by Felipe Lopez had warned all the natives of Manila and had doubtless saved many lives.

It is a pity that some facts bearing directly on the haunted pesos must in justice be told to those who have followed the tale this far.

Some weeks before Felipe Lopez told his story, a chemist employed in the government laboratory at Manila was sharing a room with a man from Connecticut. The latter was employed in the Philippine treasury and made up the money for the

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various government bureaus, including the transport service, which was used to pay salaries.

The man from Connecticut was a typical New England Yankee, with the nasal twang common to that region, and he had the reputation of being very shrewd.

The chemist one night gave him a peso which had a dark red spot on it. "It does not show at once," exclaimed the chemist, "but the spot comes out in a day or two, and lasts for a couple of weeks, when it fades again. Looks like a spot of blood, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said the Connecticut man, and smoked several cigars in silence. Then he went and had a long talk with an intelligent native named Felipe Lopez, who was a cargo checker for the army transport service.

About the time the Filipinos got no more haunted pesos in their wages, a government chemist and an employee of the treasury resigned and took passage for the United States on a steamer. Both of them had plenty of money.

Felipe Lopez owns a moving-picture theatre in Manila and no more checks cargoes for the transport service while the sun is hot, for twenty pesos a week.

Any man who thinks he would not fear the spirit of the miser and would like to go to the house in Paco and gather up the haunted pesos, need not take the trouble, for the ghost got the money which was thrown into the yard of the Ledesma residence. At least, the money is not there now, according to several Filipinos.

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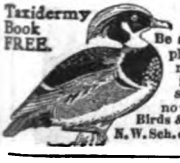

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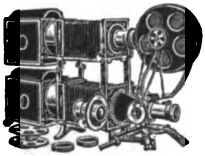

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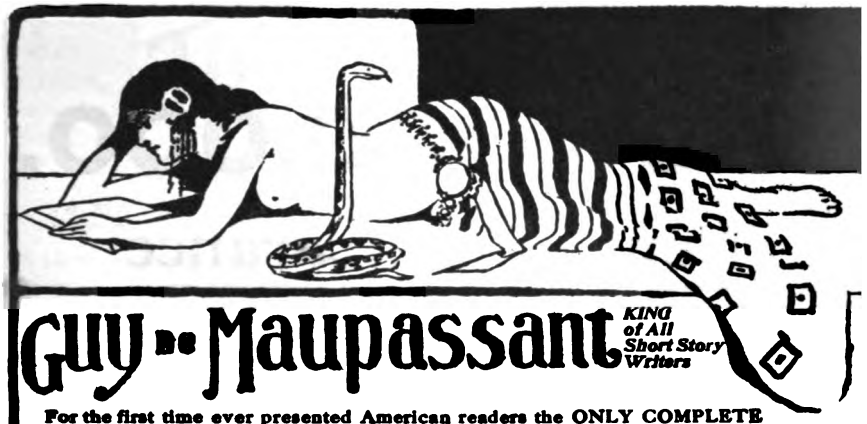

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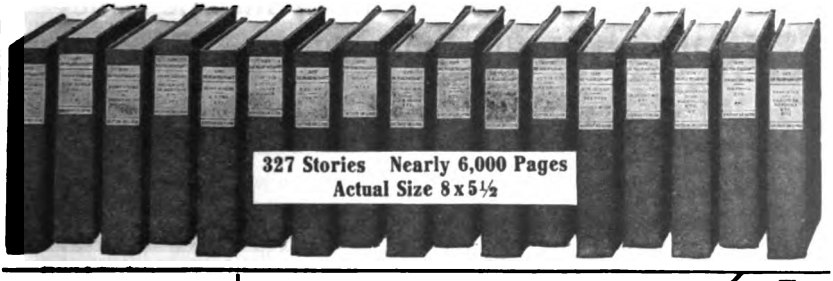

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The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

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In the Interest of Science.*

BY EMMET F. HARTE.

SMOKY hailed originally from the Big Horn basin and — aside from his worldly habits of tobacco, profanity, bad whiskey and aversion to work — was of breezy manner and playful disposition. A subtle air of romance clung to him — the picturesque, airy glamour of the great West, the West of the Unfenced Range. It was rumored that Smoky had in bygone days attained a not enviable repute along the line of altering cattle brands — even that Wyoming had become too warm a climate for him. But, be that as it may, Smoky held his hearers, when he willed, in the net of his fancy; he was a conversational artist.

"Speaking about this dry wave which is sweeping over the South and East where they say you have to get a pill-peddler's prescription in writing before you can even take a bath," remarked Smoky, on occasion, "reminds me that Southeastern Utah would be a hot location for these parched-throated, temperance rooters to colonize in; they could take their drinking water along in tablet form and when they wanted a wash they could get down and flutter in the alkali dust, like a hen does. I once took a saunter across the Nioche desert which to think of

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to-day gives me a thirst; I thank you, I don't care if I do. As I was saying, it was some years ago, along about the time the free range went into the low-down hands of the sheep-herders. The cow-man was feeling pretty pizenous and four of us boys made a so-called raid into the Green River country, one night, expecting to smear out a certain camp of unclean desecrators of the white man's grass. We struck snags; we stirred up a nest of skunks which could pick off vest-buttons with Winchesters by moonlight at a hundred and fifty yards and had not a compunction — not one. Squirrel-shooters was what that outfit consisted of, man, fancy gun artists. Our party left two with their troubles over and one plugged through and through the upper lungs who got away by the assistance of yours respectfully that also received a .30:40 through the shoulder, a graze on the side and two through the hat. That sheep-herder outfit was entirely too sarcastic with their shooting. Then they sent compliments and delicacies of the season and mentioned that they would feel more or less worried during the few days that elapsed before they made a walking sieve out of a certain person called Smoky, placing bets on the same. I, feeling disgusted with such notoriety, rode three days and nights and took a change of scenics.

"Went into the prospecting business on a small scale after that, and worked across the divide that fall, getting as far south as Colorado. The following summer I took a contract to explore the Nioche desert, the same being a second King Solomon's mines for treasure, according to my figures.

"I wandered around in company with a person called Skeeter Malone, Irish with blue hair, and good company until we run short of tobacco, whereupon he hits for Carson or Tucson, I forget which, and promises to drift back inside of three weeks with more grub and a pack-mule. He took along all the money. I afterwards heard of him in Sydney, Australia. If I should ever run across that same Skeeter I'll shore take the time to change the map on his face considerable as a token of remembrance. I puttered around in that vicinity until my water-hole went dry and then I moved over about ten miles eastward to another place. That was getting low also and I thought I'd bet-

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ter skip across the desert while I had a chance and not waste any more time. It was about three days' journey, I figured.

"It was the same old fool-story, there's been others; some of them got through and some of their bones are out there yet, lying around between the Rockies and the Sierras. Take my word that little three letters d-r-y means something on the alkali plain with the sun overhead making a mummy out of you. I went dry. It wasn't long or I wouldn't be here to-day, saying here's to your good health! (That's a mighty fine article!) But, as I was saying, I remember the thirst and beginning to get locoed.

"Then I staggered around a sandy rise, down into an arroyo and on to a little dried-up wart of a man, wearing spectacles and one of these here helmet-hats and accompanied by a solemn-looking and uncomplaining burro as natural as a photo.

"I tried to say something casual and sociable and also borrow a drink, but all I could do was make a noise like a dust-storm 'rattling o'er the stony street,' during a protracted drought; the little man wasn't all day taking in the exact situation, though, and the way he put me under treatment and softened up my caked places was good to look at even for a burro, who was the only spectator. They only had about a gallon of water themselves, and no more in sight except in a mirage lake off to the south, which was good Christian Science but awful poor for wetting, but my new friend just splattered it around promiscuous, like he owned a perpetual water right. As soon as I got the roof of my mouth and my tongue soaked loose from each other I mentioned it. The little man twiddled his spectacles contentedly and chuckled and the burro wiggled his long ears. They didn't seem to be worrying overly, so I didn't see any use of me borrowing any trouble myself, to prove which, I finished up the last drop they had an' joined in the general satisfaction prevailing, even if the thermometer was about a hundred and thirty-five or forty in the shade, with the understanding of course that there was shade, which there wasn't.

"The water made me feel better. I had renewed my lease and felt revived enough to crack a joke when I happened to let my gaze wander to a near-by cactus and as plain as day saw a

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yellow and white tom-cat sitting there with a blue ribbon around his neck and right by him, curled up snug, was one of these stubby-nosed, curly-tailed pug dogs, asleep. I didn't make no fuss at first — I waited to see if it would wear off. It didn't. Then I asked the gent in spectacles if he noticed anything peculiar about me? He said nothing struck him funny enough to laugh at. All the time I was watching that tom-cat and finally he blinked his eyes and yawned.

"'Mr. Man,' I said, reaching for my six-shooter, 'don't pay any attention to me, but I'm going to take a pop at that there cactus to ease my mind. I'm seeing things.'

"'Holy Cæsar!' he yelled, 'don't shoot! There's my cat and dog under that cactus.' I fell on his neck.

"'You've saved me!' I said. 'I thought I had gone wrong in the attic, sure enough, when I saw them two animiles there in a place like this.'

"'I'll introduce myself,' he said, 'I'm Professor Charles Van Strenger of Boston.'

"'Happy, I'm sure,' I said, 'I'm William H. Riggs of the Big Horn Basin, sometimes called Smoky for convenience. I take it, you're one of them Science fellows, from your magnifying glass. Bugs or bones?'

"'Well, just now I am looking for a certain kind of a cactus,' he said, not seeming to see any joke. It was a joke even to a dying man to see that little, solemn-looking cuss with his burro, pug-dog and tom-cat pattering around out there under that sizzling sun on the alkali sand. I laughed loud and long. It finally nettled the Prof somewhat, and he asked:

"'Are you sure you're not having some kind of a spell now?'

"'Don't mind me,' I said, 'I'm laughing at a funny story I heard last summer; the point just come to me. Are you staying around in this condemned country very long?'

"'Well,' he said, 'I don't expect to make this my home. Do you live hereabouts?' I exploded again.

"'I've been prospecting a little,' I said.

"'Know much about minerals?' he inquired.

"'I should snicker and snort!' I returned, scenting a tenderfoot, 'I'm an original mineral expert. What I don't know

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about the yellow and white and red metals in their native haunts, wouldn't pay you to fool away time over.'

"'You surprise me!' he said, producing a fat black cigar by which he saved my life the second time.

"'Aside from a few little whims in the animal line,' I remarked, 'you and me could get along fine, Prof, for days and days — in token of which loan me a match.'

"'Don't you like harmless animals?' he asked, surprised.

"'Well,' I said, affable, 'I don't mind confiding that a pug dog makes me feel hateful; they look like they might have been going somewhere in a thundering hurry sometime and run into something; a pug dog looks insulting and sneery to me. As for that there cat, I should think if you'd skin him, he'd be more comfortable in this climate. The burro I indorse.' And I changed the subject.

"'How far are we from any accumulation of moisture, if you won't be offended?' I asked.

"'About four hours,' he said. Which same answer relieved me, so I took the Prof in as a chum and a side pard, menagerie and all, even helping to corral and load the pets on to the burro before we started.

On the way across the hot, sandy plain, I even loosened up a few and related the Prof some lurid ones to beguile him.

"'And you say there have really been diamonds found in Arizona?' he inquired.

"'I do say so,' I declared, 'I've found at least a peck, myself; one I remember I sold to an insurance agent in Tombstone for $30,000.'

"'Phew!' said the Prof.

"'Sure!' I continued. 'And there's a tribe of Injuns called the Pinheads, or something, that live in caves along the cliffs, and they have gold and silver mines, nobody knows how rich, and precious stones of all kinds — rubies, garnets, topazes, amethysts, opal and others I disremember — to throw at the birds. Arizona is lousy with 'em.' I said.

"'I've heard there's many old ruins in that section,' he said. 'prehistoric ruins of cities and such.'

"'Now you've touched on my hobby.' I said, gleeful, 'Six

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Eastern scientific guys and me once dug out a buried city in New Mexico, and say, we made a clean-up! Fine statutes and oil paintings in gold frames and brass furniture and everything you could think of. You wouldn't believe me if I'd tell you we found a solid gold buffalo, life size; we did.' I wanted to see how much he would stand without squealing.

"'You surprise me!' was all he said, without batting his eye.

"Then I hitched my six-shooter around more comfortable, took a new hold and told him about Lost River and the locoed chief of the Hualpies and the petrified forest and that mastodons and other strange creatures roamed in droves along the head waters of the Snake. I spread myself on the wonders of Cañon Diablo, where, I said, awful-looking, weird things come out of holes and dance around lakes of boiling brimstone at night. I told him about the mammoth red bats of Roaring Cave in the Grand Cañon and the big Serpent of the Gila River. The more I came through with, the tickleder he was — and interested? I should say so.

"Then I handed him the one about the rooster I saw in Butte that had his head shot off just about the wings and they put a silver tube in the top of his wind-pipe with a valve in it so he could breathe; I thought that would throw him, but it didn't.

"'Wonderful!' he said. 'Most remarkable!'

"Then I unraveled a fragment or two about Moqui Medicine-men and how they could conjure up thunder-storms in a tent and grow a stalk of corn with ears on it in two hours, or turn a cur-pup into a bull-snake right before your eyes. I couldn't do nothing with him; wore myself out trying to make him beg off, but he swallowed it all.

"'Your experience has been wide and varied' he said, 'and your observation very keen and comprehensive. I might say the things you have related are, in fact, uncommon.'

"I should say they were; they were pretty near imaginary.

"Well, we had covered about ten miles or so, in the meantime, and the desert looked as flat, barren and dry as ever, as far as I could see. It was an unbroken stretch of alkali and the heat was flaring up something fierce, even if the sun was getting a little lower in the west and not beating straight down.

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"'Say, Prof,' I said, finally, 'what about that water? I can see ten miles all around and more than that straight up and it still looks discouraging; you wouldn't lie to an orphan?'

The Prof looked reproachful and the yellow cat blinked at me out of his basket like I'd forgot my manners.

"'You can take a bath, if you want to, in ten minutes,' said the Prof shortly. I never come any closer disagreeing with my own father than I did then with him, but I kept still for a wonder, concluding to wait the ten minutes at least.

"Then we came to the jumping off place. Nature cracks some funny jokes around over the country, but she never framed up a completer surprise than that there Prof. Van Strengers' jumping-off place; you walk along on the alkali, with the dust and the hot heat fogging up into your blistered face and the sun slathering away at you from over and behind, and all of a sudden you start to step, and catch yourself just in time to keep from walking out into air; right there before you is a gash in the ground about fifty yards wide and no fence to keep you from falling over; you sneak up a step and peek over and grab yourself by the suspenders; that gash is cut to the bone. About a mile or so down you can see a little silver lake and some green grass and a cottonwood tree, all correct. It's as nice as a mirage and about as accessible.

"'Amigo,' I said, thoughtful, after taking a look while the Prof waited, 'you don't happen to have a balloon, that's in good working order, about you, do you?' The Prof got in a good humor immediate.

"'Come along,' he said with broad smiles, 'I know a way down.' And he did, a little narrow, dizzy trail wound around the side and after some acrobatics and risk to life, liberty and the course of true love, we landed in the nice soft grass and uncrated the enthusiastic and despisable pug-dog and the self-satisfied tom while the burro loosened the drawstring in his ears and mowed a few swaths.

"The little lake in the centre was as smooth as ironed silk — not a bit of wind, I don't suppose, had ever roughed it since it first happened. The bottom of the Cañon was wider than the top; and the whole gash was about a mile long, with hardly a

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way to get up or down, only the trail we come by. The sides didn't look so high from the bottom. I think the Prof said it was about 200 feet from the desert straight down to the water. I shook hands six times.

"'Prof,' I said, 'I'll take back everything I ever thought about you, and I hereby proclaim that if you want to keep a guinea-pig, a white rat, or a bush-spider for a pet, you've got a right to, and I'm for you most prodigious. You are an extinguished gentleman, a true sport and a judge of economics.'

"'I'm much obliged for your good opinion,' said the Prof, 'come into the house.' I hadn't seen any house, but he had one all right, and that wasn't all he had.

"Around a jut in the rocky wall was a three-story, stone, cliff-dweller mansion as neat and fine as Fifth Avenue, New York, which I haven't seen but have heard of, and if that there science scamp didn't have everything modern, up to standard and bar none, I'll kiss the first Chink I see. He had rooms — about a hundred and fifty of 'em — fitted up for high-living: Cook-room, bedroom, sitting-room, dining-room, parlor, library, cloak-room, ante-room, cellar, roof-garden, vestibule, chapel.

"He had a junk-shop he called a laboratory with all kinds of little contraptions connected therewith. He had books and magazines to read and everything to do heavy housekeeping with, except a female cook. Down alongside the little lake, he had a garden with a toy irrigation ditch, and lettuce, radishes and spuds growing fit to tickle you to death. The whole lay-out appeared to me to be just about as snug and comfortable as Robinson Crusoe ever dared to dream about and I started skirmishing for a job in a roundabout way.

"'Prof,' I said, 'as near as I can observe by your samples, you've got convenient quarters when once in, but you seem to be some shy a cook. I'll mention, casual, while on the subject, that that's my strong point — I am there with the skillet.'

"'You surprise me,' he returned, 'and since you mentioned it, I'll allow you to get supper.'

"Well, I spread myself on that supper. No spuds was ever lucky enough to be fried as them, no coffee ever as delicious, no

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flap-jacks half as temptatious. The bacon by itself was enough to entice a man five hundred miles away from his happy home, if he knew about it; and we cut a can of apples of some ancient vintage and made turnovers in the grease. The Prof tucked away six and fell back gibbering with delight. I was elected cook without a dissenting vote. If there was any salary attached to my new job, I'll swear I never heard what it was. We forgot to mention it at the time and afterwards things got so interesting and entertaining that I never thought to remind the Prof that I was hired help. The job wasn't hard. I just prognosticated around and smoked the Prof's black cigars and concocted viands whenever we got hungry. I made myself solid with the menagerie and the blooming pug-dog got so he'd follow me around like I was his school chum. The tom-cat was too lazy to follow anything, and a burro prefers his own company to anybody else's — but the pup was a born accompanist. The Prof was busy. I've met a lot of these here science galoots trailing around over this Western country, and they're mostly pecking at rocks, piking for fossiles or accumulating fool things like caterpillars or other specimens as they call them, and think they're smarter than range people anywhere. Perhaps they are — I've never heard what the United States court says on the subject. But the Prof wasn't collecting specimens; he never pecked a rock or caught a butterfly, of which there were some six or eight at large in the valley; he puttered around in his laboratory once in awhile and had bottles of gummy-looking stuff he'd ponder over, besides crocks full of smelly roots and things asoak. One day he says to me:

"'Smoky,' he allowed, 'I wish you'd take the donkey and go down to the south about nine miles, where you'll find an arroyo with some cactoribus scandalous combustibus — or something that sounded like that — growing. Gather me about a bushel and come back by return mail, will you?' I did. And scratched up my hide some doing it. When we got back the Prof had rigged up a regular distillery, up in one of the rooms, and for awhile I surmised he was going into the moonshine business. I didn't discourage him — it was a thirsty country.

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"Well, he made sour-mash out of the cactus and then he had me make a four-days' trip to the settlement to get an express package for him. The town was a Mormon village called Prophet's Choice — I've heard it's been discontinued since — and they had a twice a week stage-line to the railroad. There wasn't a drop of anything better to drink than water in the town without positively exhibiting at least two rattlesnake bites, so I didn't sojourn long after I got my errand done. I took back also a few lines of bacon, salt, sugar and other luxuries, and wafted in, sober and melancholy, a whole half-day ahead of schedule. The Prof said he'd missed my cooking, and the pup and the tom were right glad to see me. The Prof opened his package, which consisted of a lot of little bundles and bottles like he was going to start a drug-store. He squinted at them and hum-hawed to himself most sociable. Finally he said:

"'Two drops of this would destroy all the nine lives of our friend here,' holding up a small bottle and indicating Thomas curled up on the floor, 'and I mix it in a glassful of sugared water and a teaspoonful of these other two with it and it makes a harmless drink, pleasant and beneficial.'

"'I'll take your word for it,' I said, 'though I wouldn't pass up about four fingers of good fire water just now if I had it.'

"'Why didn't you mention it?' he said, surprised, 'I've got a little somewhere around, I think. I'll look for it,' and back he comes with a flat bottle he'd had cached somewhere with not even the label broken. He had saved my life the third time. In return for them two drinks — he allowed me two — I architectured a supper for the bunch that put them all down cooing. Prof said it was a culinary, that's the word he used, a culinary masterpiece.

"'Prof,' I said, 'without meaning any offense, and if it's a fair question, what kind of dope is this you're concocting up there in your lavatory, or whatever you call it? You're not making anything good to drink and overlooking your old friend Smoky?'

"The little cuss hobnobbed with himself for quite a while before answering; he didn't seem crazy to tell everything, but finally he loosened.

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"'Smoky,' he said, after awhile, 'I'm engaged in a secret work — a work of vast importance and far-reaching possibilities — and if I was not certain of success I wouldn't even give you a hint; as it is, I'll confide that I have discovered the Elixir of Life.'

"'I never dreamed of such a business,' I said, 'or I'd 'a' been tiptoeing around with my heart in my throat. What the devil is the Elixir of Life, if it's a fair question?'

"'I'll explain,' he said, patient as a schoolmarm with an unusually bullet-headed kid, 'all down through history, certain men have searched and worked to discover a serum that will arrest the decay of tissues' — that was what he said, exactly. — 'and they have all failed. This wonderful Elixir, this infusion into the veins of new energy and the restoring of youth, again and again, the prolonging of the life of man into an indefinite period, has been sought after a heap,' he said, 'and it remained for me, Professor Van Strenger, in the beginning of the twentieth century, to find the key to the problem.' I was so interested I forgot to puff and my cigar went out. I hadn't ever sized up the Prof for being such an entertainer.

"'I must ask you to keep the secret awhile longer,' he went on, 'until I have completed a sufficient supply for extensive experiments.'

"'Sure,' I said, 'Prof, you needn't be afraid of me spreading it; I don't see very many people lately and I'm known as the most ferocious kind of a liar anyway, so it wouldn't be believed.'

"'Thank you,' said he, and continued; 'I have gone further than the others; my discovery not only prolongs life, but restores it. I can raise the dead.'

"Now I had related the Prof some pretty fanciful ones from time to time as they occurred to me, but I hadn't expected him to try to get back like that. I guffawed. What does he do then? He snapped his talkograph shut like a collapsible tin cup and closed up like a clam. Not another word. Nitto. He had no sense of humor. I saw that the little cuss actually believed what he'd been telling and I tried to square myself. No, he had his feelings hurt and was sorer than barber's itch. We went to

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bed that night non-committal and uncommunicative and in the morning it took two soft-boiled eggs and an armload of tortillas to make the Prof smile; I forgot to say we had, among other things in the animal line, four hens and a terrible pompous old rooster in our gully, and our eggs were as fresh as if just from college.

"Well, when the Prof had lapped up about a dollar and eighty cents' worth of home cooking, he burst into bloom and commenced to tell more about the dope business again.

"'Smoky,' he said, 'of course you couldn't be expected to believe everything about the Elixir without some visible manifestations of its properties. I have decided to give you a proof. Which of the animals, now, would you say that I thought the most of, if asked?'

"'Well,' I said, 'the burro is the usefulest, the pup is the friendliest, and the kitty is the least account for any possible thing — I should say, I guess, that you are most sentimental of all about the kitty.'

"'Good!' said he, 'we'll drown Thomas.'

"'Drown him?' I said, incredulous.

"'Drown him,' he said, getting up, 'till he is deader than an Egyptian mummy. Then I'll bring him back to life with the Elixir.'

"'I'd much rather get rid of the pug,' I said, finally, 'he's such an insolent, insulting, over-fed, smart Alex and —'

"'All right,' said Prof, 'drown 'em both if you like.'

"'How about the burro?' I asked, 'and the poultry?'

"'Never mind them,' he said, 'for the present, the two will do.' The Prof never saw a joke during our acquaintance.

"Well, I caught the pets and attached a twenty-pound rock to each one, under the Prof's directions; then I tied a rope to 'em and anchored 'em to the shore and there was two splashes about a minute apart in our lake and the pug and the tom were across into the happy hunting grounds. I hated to do it — it is against my grain to kill a creature like that for nothing — I even wanted to yank 'em out again; almost begged the Prof to let me, but he said 'No.'

"'Leave them in until night,' he said, 'then you will admit they are reasonably dead.'

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"'I'll believe they are fairly well extinct in half an hour.' I said, 'neither one being frogs or turtles.'

"'Good!' he said. 'I want you to be satisfied.'

"Well, we left them defunct animiles in ten feet of water all that day. Till six P. M. by the Prof's John Deere watch they soaked, and then, one by one, I pulled 'em out and viewed the remainders. They was shore dead — I'll vouch for it. Drowned plumb, exact and complete, and we toted them, all wet and drippy, into the lavatory where the Prof expected to do his stunts. I laid 'em out on a flat rock where they could drain and the Prof got out his little bottles and his tools.

"'Which first?' he asked, rolling up his sleeves.

"'You're the doctor,' I said, 'one's as dear to me as the other.'

"'Hand me Thomas, then,' he said. I drained the yellow cat a minute and then held him up while the Prof took his bicycle pump and shot about four fingers of plate blue dope just back of his right ear. Now, wonders never cease in this Western country, and sometimes a man doubts his own eyesight, but this here is straighter than the first five cards out of a new deck: That there tom-cat begun to twitch, then he squirmed and sputtered a little and kicked with his foot; then, I hope to never raise another glass if he didn't cough, get up and go rub against the Prof's leg as live as any cat that ever meowed and me with my hair riz up fiercer than the bristles of an Arkansas hog in search of a lost acorn.

"'Now for Marcus Antonius,' he said, enthusiastic. I looked at that there pug pup, all water-soaked and bedraggled, with his lip curled up and peeled off of his teeth in his customary sneery way, but deader than a mackerel, and I first thought it was a waste of dope to bring him back. He wasn't any earthly good, but — I gathered him up and brought him over. There was some water sloshing around inside him which seeped out finally, and in five minutes he was wagging his tail. Well, the Prof had certainly delivered the goods. He had produced the results strictly. He also had me roped and flung spraddling; my voice sounded little and far away when I perked up enough to say something out loud.

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"'Prof,' I said, 'you win. Deuce high is my best. I'm considered something of a judge of cattle, a fair shot, can cook, throw a rope, ride, and hold a mean hand in poker sometimes, but I don't perform no miracles. At magic, I pass. Your work is too deep for me.'

"'Tut, tut!' he answered, 'it's nothing, I could do the same with you, yourself.'

"'Here, now, Prof,' I said, scared into a coat of mush-ice all over. 'Prof, you don't aim to try no freak work on poor old, harmless Smoky, do you?'

"'My dear man,' he said, 'calm yourself. I wouldn't hurt one hair of that bald spot on your head. I will make a giddy and blithesome youth out of you.'

"'Not me!' I said, 'No, you don't; not for one minute.'

"He looked disappointed. That night I took turn about sleeping with each eye; the other I kept on the Prof, who slept like an innocent baby and woke up just as fresh as I was groggy. All morning he was busy in his junk-shop making dope and tinkering around among his bottles and crocks; then he come out, loaded up the burro with some grub and water and said he would likely be gone for two days, after some more ungodly plants or something he needed to make a certain kind of a poison out of. He was getting rabid. In the meantime I was to look out for the pets, feed the chickens, keep the distillery going and meditate on the mysteries of life in general.

"I breathed a terrible sight easier after I saw his pink shirt and big white helmet fade over the top of the cliff; I could now take it cozy and comfortable for at least two days.

"With all the crazy dopes and medicines that cuss had around, and the designs he had on every living thing loose, I was beginning to feel unsafe in his company. I couldn't tell when he'd doctor my coffee on the sly and I'd find myself suddenly deader than an Aztec, to be brought back to life, maybe — maybe not. That day I just loafed around lazy, figuring on some scheme to get the Prof's attentions switched off on some other track. Every game has a counter-play of some kind.

"As I said, I thought I was all safe for a day or two at least, and that first night went to roost at sundown without

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leaving any look-out on duty. I woke up sudden along after midnight. I don't remember *hearing* anything, I just *felt* something, and I opened my sleepy eyes and, over where the moonlight streamed in through the broken wall of the old shack, there squatted the Prof with his bicycle pump, his awls and other things, squinting at a dose of something he was dropping out of a bottle, with his thumb over the hole. I saw it all: He was getting ready to slide me into that there place where you needn't take your suitcase along, and a minute more and I would have been kicking my last. Did you ever see an antelope run? He leaves the ground and swims off through the air, then he floats down, springs, and swims off again. That's the way me and Prof Van Strenger parted company. I was the antelope. One yell and two bumps and I was out on the grass and I was moving. Going up that there trail I just made a blur along the face of the cliff, and when I hit the level, sandy desert up above, I just turned loose, let go, and stampeded for Colorado. They say an Apache will lope off and keep it up all day, but that's just loping. I was scorching the air, making a farewell yellow streak across the Nioche country. I was still running at daylight; by noon I was clear away, and I never went back, neither. I never even *looked* back. I've often thought about the Prof. and wondered what *did* become of the cuss and his Elixir, and whether he was really fixing up to take a shot at me with that squirt gun that night, or whether he was up to something else. Maybe he was just going to invigorate the burro, after all, or put some corn cure on a sore toe. Anyway, he didn't dope *me*."

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The Bermuda Passenger.*

BY GUTHRIE KELLY.

IN a quiet nook of the Westminster café, two gentlemen were discussing the merits of an entertainment from which they had just returned. It was an exhibition of legerdemain by a noted Hindoo, whose tricks were novel and startling.

"Did you ever see a dead man walk, Doctor?" asked the younger.

"Why, no, that is — I have never seen a man walk after a physician had pronounced him dead."

"Well," laughed the first speaker, "I knew a case where a physician pronounced a man dead, and yet that man walked."

"How was that?"

"I was second engineer of an old tramp steamer out of Charleston, two years ago. You know I've knocked about a little and there were times when I was dead broke. This was one of them, or I would never have shipped aboard that boat. She was rotten enough to fall apart, and her engines were junk. But the captain was part owner, and when he got a cargo he didn't care, as long as she floated. He'd stop for nothing.

"One night we put to sea with a cargo of mixed freight, bound for Bermuda. The moon was very bright, and it was one of those quiet nights one meets in the semi-tropics. I was on deck sniffing a breath of salt air before beginning my watch below, when a motor boat suddenly slid from behind the breakwater and headed in our direction. We weren't more than two miles from the harbor, and were going as fast as the rickety engines would permit, but it didn't take long for that boat to get within hail. She was able to cut circles around our old craft.

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"As the boat came alongside, the captain ordered the engines slowed down, we passed a line to the speedy stranger, and soon had her two passengers aboard.

"One of them introduced himself as a member of the Charleston detective force, and said his companion was a police surgeon.

"'I'm sorry to delay you, Captain,' said the first, 'but you have a fugitive on board.'

"'Have I?' asked the old man, without lifting an eyebrow.

"'You have,' repeated the stranger. 'He's a bank robber, and a slick one, too. Held them up clean and easy at closing time this afternoon, single handed. Covered the teller and the bank cop, and scooped forty thousand dollars into a satchel. Then he beat it for the railroad yards. We hunted him until dark, and finally tracked him down to the docks. I know that he's on this ship, for the tug man told me he put a passenger on board just outside the harbor. The description tallies with our man, so just produce him, and do it sudden. And stop your old ship, too! I don't want to sail back from the middle of the Atlantic in a launch. Stop her, I say, till I get my man and start back with him, or else take us all back to Charleston.'

"'Go on and get your bank robber,' said the captain. 'He's aboard all right, or, anyhow, the fellow that came off the tug is here. He may be a bank robber or a preacher, or both, for all I know. He told us he wanted to go to Bermuda with us and as he didn't want the trip for nothing, and wanted to be let alone, I took him aboard. I know nothing about him, and I don't want to. You'll find him in the first stateroom from the companion way.'

"After saying this the captain walked forward to the bridge, and the detective called after him.

"'Look here! are you going to stop this ship?'

"'Did I say anything about stopping?' sneered the old man. 'No, sir, I didn't.' You're not in Charleston now, and I'm captain of this ship and boss out here. It takes a revenue cutter to make me heave to. Go and get your man if you ain't afraid to tackle him, and I'll tow your launch till you're ready to go back, or you can go on to Bermuda if you like. I'll make the passage cheap to you.'

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"So the detective and the doctor went below. The captain and I followed them a moment later, but we had no intention of helping in the capture. We thought there would be a fight, and wanted to have a look.

"The two of them started for the stateroom, but the man inside seemed to know something was up, for before they reached the door he locked it.

"'He can't get out of there, can he, Cap?' asked the detective.

"'Not unless you get him out.'

"The taunt had some effect on the two, and after a little whispered conversation they made a rush. But this time when they turned the knob the door opened easily, and they both stumbled into the room.

"And there, lying across the bunk, was the man that came aboard from the tug. He was a tall, well dressed, genteel-looking chap, and after the visitors had recovered from their astonishment the doctor stepped up to the prostrate form and examined it.

"'Dead, and not a mark on him!' he exclaimed.

"Then a small object on the floor caught his eye, and he stooped and picked it up."

"'Here's the stuff that did it,' he exclaimed, holding up a small hypodermic syringe. Then he turned up the man's sleeve, and found a small puncture on his arm with a new acid burn just below it.

"'Hydrocyanic!' cried the doctor. 'He fixed himself when he saw the game was up. Well, he did it in a business-like manner.'

"'Gosh!' exclaimed the detective. 'Are you sure he's dead?'

"'Not the least doubt of that,' answered the doctor. 'No heart, no respiration, and he's getting cold already. When they use that stuff there isn't any room for doubt.'

"'And that's all I get for chasing him out here,' muttered the detective. 'But how about the satchel, Cap? What did he do with that?'

"'Nary a bit of luggage did he have with him,' said the captain. 'Not a bag or bundle.'

"They searched the cabin, but found nothing. His pockets

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contained only the case that held the syringe, but pinned to his undershirt were a few new bills, about a hundred dollars in all.

"'That's little to show for all this trouble,' growled the detective.

"'Now, Cap, bring the ship to, while we settle this thing. I can't have him buried at sea, because I've got to show something. We can go on to Bermuda, though. We must be a long way out by this time.'

"The captain's manner had changed some since the latest developments.

"'I'll heave to long enough for us to talk it over,' he replied, adding, 'Come up on deck.'

"So we all went up and the captain gave orders to stop the engine. Then he turned round and addressed the detective.

"'Now, then,' he said, speaking in a more friendly tone, 'You can't take that chap to Bermuda. The crew won't stand for it. Sailormen are scared of anything of that kind, and I don't blame 'em. Dead men's society is not a thing I hanker after myself. The best thing for you to do is to get back in your launch. So I'll have the body and a couple of cans of gasoline put aboard, while you're taking another look to see if you can find that satchel you've been talking about.'

"The two detectives agreed, and renewed the search while the body and the gasoline were being put on the launch, but they found nothing. They were just on the point of climbing over the side when the captain called back:

"'To show there's no hard feelings on either side come down and have a nip,' he said, and as he included me in the invitation, we all went below again.

"The captain had just got the bottle uncorked when we heard something that sent us up the ladder in record time. It was the unmistakable cough of a gasoline engine, and when we got on deck that old motor boat was smashing away toward the horizon as hard as she could go. At the wheel was a figure that we had no difficulty in recognizing in the bright moonlight — it was the late corpse of the Bermuda passenger, and he was very much alive."

"Is that the end of the incident?" asked the doctor, as his companion leaned back in his chair.

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"That's all worth telling," replied the story teller. "We swung round and chased that boat, but the detective said it was good for fifteen miles an hour, and as our old hulk could only make seven we gave it up. I remember the authorities tried to make it hot for the captain, but he got out of it. That old ark of his had a bad name with sailors on this side, so he took her to the Orient. Men didn't fancy sailing in *The Cuban* — *Cuban Queen* or *The Cuban Princess* or whatever her name was."

"It was *The Cuban Belle,*" said a voice near the speaker's elbow.

"Why, to be sure, it was *The Cuban Belle,*" cried the man who had told the story, turning as he spoke to the one who had supplied the information. "But how did you know?" he asked, after scrutinizing the other's features.

"I was in Charleston at the time and became interested in the case," replied the stranger. "Pardon me for overhearing your story, I couldn't help it. I happened to know of a few incidents you didn't mention."

"Then you will perhaps be able to tell us if the bank robber was in league with the captain," asked the narrator.

"You must draw your own conclusions concerning that," replied the other, smiling. "But when the robber saw the launch in pursuit he knew that he would certainly be taken prisoner. He went to his cabin and arranged his stage setting. He took his hypodermic syringe, filled it with hydrocyanic acid, and then, by opening the porthole he overheard the conversation that took place when the two officers came aboard. When they started for his cabin he emptied half the contents of the syringe through the porthole, and after making a puncture in his arm with a clean needle, he burned himself slightly near the spot with the acid. Then he unlocked the door and flung himself upon the berth and feigned death."

The two men listening to the explanation stared at the stranger.

"But — but," stammered the doctor, "the police surgeon examined the —"

"Oh, yes," interrupted the other, laughing easily, "but doctors, my dear sir, take much for granted. He saw an apparently lifeless man and a syringe containing hydrocyanic acid, and the two in

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the mind of an imaginative man immediately conjures up the word 'suicide'."

The first narrator was watching the face of the stranger with increased interest.

"You say you were interested in the case," he said. "Were you on board?"

The stranger rose leisurely, buttoned his fur coat, handed the waiter the amount of his check and, bowing politely to the two others said, "I am the only man who has the right to contradict the doctor. One of those gasoline cans, by the way, happened to be a satchel, the contents of which were, in due time, divided by that old captain of yours and his Burmuda passenger."

He bowed again and passed quickly out into the night, leaving the doctor and the late second engineer of *The Cuban Belle* staring in astonishment at each other.

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The Conversion.*

BY FLORENCE MARTIN EASTLAND.

HE silence was painfully embarrassing. Flora Harriman fidgeted in her seat at the back of the chapel, yet watched with troubled eyes two very young girls ahead of her. The fact that she sat well back indicated her religious standing. Only the orthodox with pronounced tendencies toward the relating of religious experiences were in sufficient favor to sit beneath the alert brown eyes and engaging smile of their mentor and youthful teacher, Elizabeth Jordan.

"The Lord is waiting for your decision, girls," came in Miss Jordan's rich, pleading voice. "There is work to do in foreign lands. Millions are in bondage waiting to hear of salvation. Will you carry them the glad tidings?" Again a pause, while the girls in front of Flora gazed at each other in agonized appeal.

Flora felt an odd sense of anger while struggling with an inclination to laugh at her fancy's picture — a million squatting creatures with tied hands and no interest in life except in the appearance of those round-bodied, pink-and-white girls ahead of her, whose mental disquiet at this time came from a confliction of duty to and desire for their fellow-men. Nothing seemed more absurd to Flora than that their red lips, made for kisses, should drop pearls of wisdom into the heathen ear, or that those soft hands, intended to grow firm through the discharge of domestic duties, should be the distributors of tracts and Bibles. Such a sacrifice of girlish dreams and natural purposes did this appear that when Miss Jordan remarked meaningly: "I realize that important decisions take time. Will some one start a hymn?" Flora began solemnly:

"On the other side of Jordan."

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The teacher's eyes sought the singer's, but, seeing no evidence of malice, she joined with the others. Not so the wrestling girls, who in a reaction after their painful soul-searching, bent over with shaking shoulders when the ridiculous application of the words occurred to them.

At the conclusion of the first stanza the teacher changed the hymn to one with more bearing on the subject, and at its close she said:

"Now, I'm going to talk to the Lord about this."

All through the prayer, which was offered in a purely conversational way, Flora was antagonized, as she had always been by the assumption of familiarity with the Deity. It reminded her of an evangelist she once heard who began his petitions as if he were at a telephone, with "Lord, this is George talking." She tried to overcome her prejudice by recounting the vast amount of good Miss Jordan had accomplished; of the interest she took in her pupils' progress in those branches, music and history, in which she was instructor; of her life full of active charities; of her godliness. But always rose this point of difference: The urging of girls — young girls who did not know their own minds — to take the foreign missionary pledge. While Miss Jordan's prayer carried the reminder that she was ready to go to any place at any time when the call came, Flora was thinking of the arguments of rebuttal which she would use on her way home with the teacher, who boarded at the same place as Flora.

Miss Jordan joined her at the door and, slipping her arm through the other's, said in a tone ringing with sincerity:

"Won't you ever see the work God intended you to do?"

"I hope so," Flora answered honestly, "but if it is foreign missions, I doubt it. Tell me why you are so eager to go."

"To save the millions in bondage," was the surprised answer. "Can you possibly rest when you think of their lost souls?"

"They don't disturb me half so much as those around us who have heard what you will say and are yet more hopelessly lost. Besides, I don't believe — But no matter. Are you sure it isn't more a desire for change that impels you to go?"

"Yes," the other answered firmly, too earnest to be offended,

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" my personal inclinations I am glad to sacrifice. They are all I have to give, except my time."

" But, Miss Jordan, you were never intended for that. Why, your beautiful red hair alone, to say nothing of the temperament which goes with it, is a contradiction. It should grow silvery in the quiet of a home — and your tender voice has a glorious future if you devote it to lullabys as you rock a cradle."

" That would be a selfish limitation. It is good work, to be sure, but there would be no sacrifice in that."

" How do you know that the heathen women may not feel a mission to take the place in domestic life which you vacate, when you have shown them that the Bible teaches women to abide faithfully in their homes? "

" Now you are absurd."

" Perhaps. Tell me why you dropped woman's suffrage to take up foreign missions."

" I found greater light and saw a higher duty."

" Yes? And when you find something to take the place of missions — "

" There is nothing higher, my dear. That is the summit of God's work."

" Not the temperance work, nor the Sunday School, nor social purity? I remember when each of these was your one mission in life."

Miss Jordan smiled charmingly, exciting Flora's admiration, although the smile was one of tolerance for such amazing lack of progress.

" They are all good, necessary work, leading us to higher ideals, step by step; preparing us for the highest of all missions, the salvation of the heathen. I always work according to the light that is given me."

" If I were not convinced that you believe that, I should regard you as a most adorable humbug. And I still insist that an aureole like yours is best used for domestic illumination."

The girls parted, and, as Miss Jordan ascended the stairs, the other looked after her thoughtfully.

" What splendid ability she has," Flora reflected in humorous admiration. " With no apparent effort she rids herself of any

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encumbering belief the minute she strikes a new thought, and she honestly thinks the last is of the greatest importance. She needs a balance-wheel."

Within a few days Flora quite accidentally confirmed her opinion that underneath Miss Jordan's consecration to the public good there lay at least a germ of yearning for the more restricted province of women. It was after a social evening at the chapel, where Miss Jordan had delighted the students with several musical numbers. To escape a persistent admirer, Flora had slipped away with a girl friend. She was returning alone, having seen the friend to her door, when into the unlighted by-street came a couple who slowly walked a little ahead of Flora.

With her thoughts upon other matters Flora followed, and for a time was unaware of what they were saying, but presently she recognized Miss Jordan's voice.

"You have done me a great honor, Mr. Williams —"

"Say Douglas," interrupted another familiar voice.

"A very great honor — Douglas. I would like to consider your proposal, truly. I can fancy no greater joy than the peace and security of love and home, except the joy of working for the Lord. I wish I might believe He intended me for such a mission. I have talked to Him about it since our conversation a week ago — but I still feel there is other work for me."

Flora tried to close her ears to the words, to walk more slowly still. For excellent reasons she did not wish the two to know she was behind, one being the fact that the man — he was still a very young man — had once been as ardent in his pursuit of Flora herself, and even a month before had assured her he was still on her "waiting-list." In spite of her efforts, the young man's words now floated back distinctly:

"Then let me go with you. I may not be efficient in winning souls, but I can make your way easier. Take my name and the world's goods I possess, and as you value the salvation of a soul, take me."

Reaching another street, Flora followed it for a block in order to avoid hearing more. She must have walked very rapidly, however, to reach her gate just behind them as Miss Jordan concluded with — "At all events, we must wait till my for-

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eign work is ended. Remember I do not hold you to the agreement — "

Her words ceased as Flora displayed an alarming bronchial tendency which covered the embarrassing silence. Both regarded Flora suspiciously, but she regained her voice long enough to observe, carelessly:

"I thought as I came across the street just now that I had seen your backs before. How is that for an Irish bull?"

"Good," responded Williams in a tone of relief.

"Have you heard?" inquired Miss Jordan as she took out her latchkey.

Flora started guiltily. "Ever since I was a child; for, fortunately, I was born with a well-developed sense of hearing."

The flippant reply passed over her companion, whose lack of humor was as great as the seriousness with which she took herself.

"The call has come through the church Board of Foreign Missions. I will leave in four weeks for Korea, immediately after the graduating exercises."

"To be gone — ?"

"Four years. I wish you would go with me. You have sufficient means to go independently."

"I think I can use them to better purpose. Besides, I should probably convince you during that time that your place is at home, and in the reaction your choice would be limited to a queueless native or a dyspeptic co-worker of the stronger sex."

Miss Jordan sighed: "You won't take my intentions seriously — yet, some way, I am never offended."

In the busy days which preceded commencement exercises Flora had few private opportunities for talking to the teacher who, with an intensified aureole, was youthfully enjoying the pedestaled position her sacrifice had won. The missionary meetings became a spiritual feast, and the various churches were embarrassed by the proffered services of inexperienced girls who wished transportation to the ends of the earth. Flora attended the last meeting, held the evening of Miss Jordan's departure. Williams was present with an air of pensive interest not altogether due to the benighted state of the heathen

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His lingering gaze, which followed the teacher, seemed fraught with the mournful phrase, "Four years. F-o-u-r y-e-a-r-s!" — but Flora smilingly shook her head as she thought:

"She won't last that length of time. Her mind is too active and her hair too red."

Upon the table, heaped with incongruous gifts to Miss Jordan, Flora placed twenty-five dollars in an envelope bearing the direction: "For personal use only."

The last prayer was said, the last hymn sung, and most of the farewells over, when Flora presented herself.

"I've heard twenty-seven ask you to write, so I'm not going to be the twenty-eighth. I shall hear of you — Miss Jordan blushed a little as her brown eyes sought Williams's — "and that will suffice until I see you again."

"Good-bye, dear Flora."

"No — auf Wiedersehen."

The next day Flora also departed, but her unimportant mission was to take charge of an orphanage while its busy matron enjoyed a much-needed vacation. Just before leaving, Williams, who had rather avoided her of late, confessed his provisionary engagement to Miss Jordan and asked permission to resume his calls on Flora when both were again in their home town. To her cordial assertion that his engaged condition need not affect their friendship he answered with his former frankness:

"Of course not — and it will be such a pleasure to talk to you about her and to read you her letters."

No sooner had Flora reached her own home a month later than Williams promptly appeared. There was a curious sense of constraint about him that at once awakened Flora's suspicions, but, preferring to let him take the initiative, she carefully avoided mentioning Miss Jordan's name. So did he. He came again the next evening, with lines of determination about his mouth, and again he departed without unbosoming himself. But the third evening he tramped in grimly, nor paused for conventional greeting till he had eased his mind:

"I haven't heard from her yet."

"Truly?"

"Cross my heart to die," he answered, in an attempt to lighten

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his — mortification, Flora decided. "She was going to stop off several places to visit distant relatives — they're all she has, you know — and I was to write in care of the steamship company in Seattle. Well, I didn't hear from her before she reached Seattle, as I thought I should, nor from that point either, and I concluded she was too busy to write before sailing, but that I would receive a letter just as soon as she reached a foreign port. Not a word has come from her and last week my own letter was returned by the steamship company."

"They must have neglected to give it to her."

"I thought so, for of course she sailed. I should certainly have heard if she hadn't."

"What have you done?"

"Nothing; what could I do?"

"I think if I were a waiting lover I should write to the Board of Foreign Missions under whose protection she started."

"That's so. Strange I didn't think of that before. I'll write now. Give me some stationery, will you?"

The letter was despatched and the succeeding two weeks passed pleasantly enough except for an occasional spasm of anxiety on the young man's part. Flora was becoming decidedly uneasy, when Williams at length brought an answer from the Board. It was brief almost to the point of curtness, merely stating that a few weeks previous Miss Jordan had returned the money provided for her expenses and informed them that she had found a higher mission in her own land. She gave no address.

"What do you suppose it is?" Flora demanded. "If you had been along with her I could have hazarded an opinion."

"Yes," was the skeptical rejoinder, "my being with her would have had a lot of weight. I suppose right now the thought of the bond between us is occupying all her time, wherever she is."

"But where? where? I never heard of such a complete disappearance of a luminary!"

During the ensuing year the two often repeated their question. No amount of inquiry had elicited any information. Letters from other college students all bore the same observation: "I thought of course you would know what has become of her."

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Curiosity had long since replaced concern when Flora went to Kansas City for a visit.

One Sunday morning, while on her way to services at a church of her own faith, the car-line to which she would transfer was temporarily disabled. The distance being too great for walking, she decided to stroll along until she came to a church whose invitation was insistent. She passed a half-dozen before the impulse to enter a little gray wooden structure, with a jangling bell in a squatty tower, was stronger than the seduction of the cool, shady street.

She was barely seated in the rear of the fast-filling room when the little organ softly took up the welcome of the jangling bell, and, looking up, Flora's mouth opened in astonishment at a sight of Miss Jordan's bright, earnest face above the instrument. Presently the choir filed in, and in the good singing Flora recognized the teacher's voice and direction. Before the sermon began, when the choir was settling itself, the organist disappeared behind a curtain, reappearing in time to resume her place at the organ at the conclusion of the address.

Flora watched her eagerly, noting a puzzling change which could not be located all at once. "No, she doesn't look a day older, and she is prettier than ever. It must be the new way of dressing her hair that gives her the matronly air and poise. This is the first time I have seen it parted and waved, and she looks a perfect Madonna."

There was a mother's meeting announced to take place at the end of the services. Flora, hunting in her purse for a coin for the collection plate, missed part of the minister's words, but caught, somewhat indistinctly, "with Miss Jordan to lead, as usual." Flora remained for the meeting.

"Now, mothers," the leader began in exactly the old way, "let us each have a silent talk with the Lord. If you have a burden, just tell Him about it. No one has a greater right than we mothers."

"'We mothers'!" thought Flora. "What does she mean?" At once she remembered a time when Miss Jordan seriously considered the adoption of a deserted child. "That's what she has done. Maybe she's mothering a dozen or so. I wouldn't be surprised."

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The meeting was tantalizingly long to Flora, who tried in vain to verify her conclusion. Once, indeed, she was certain she was on the right track when the leader remarked:

"Teach your children to obey. Obedience is the first training mine will get."

Concluding that Miss Jordan's statement was but potential, Flora promptly reversed her judgment when the speaker closed her address:

"There is no love so charitable, so nearly the divine forgiveness, as a mother's for her own child. Nor is there any woman's work so great as the shaping of the future generations through the spiritual and moral training she gives to her children. I surrendered a larger opportunity for work because I was convinced I could accomplish more in a quieter way. Is there, dear mothers, any higher ambition than that reward promised in the words, 'Her children shall rise up and call her blessed'?"

The meeting was scarcely done when Flora pushed her way to the leader. Her long-pent curiosity found vent during her greeting in the exclamation:

"Before I die, Elizabeth Jordan, tell me just what you are doing."

"I have found my mission."

"Which one?" demanded her exasperated friend.

Without a word she led Flora to a little room back of the altar, where the minister was shaking a perambulator with more vigor than discretion.

"This is my husband, Miss Harriman, and —"

"But I thought he called you Miss Jordan," Flora protested, extending a limp hand.

"No — Mrs. Gordon. And this," with a look of pride at the round-faced occupant of the perambulator, "is my son."

"Which is the heathen?" Flora mischievously inquired.

With a blush Mrs. Gordon continued:

"I have found woman's highest mission without seeking it at the ends of the earth. If we only knew, our greatest work lies all around us in simple duties. My husband has shown me the way to find them.

It took many questions to get the facts, but Flora at length

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learned that the embryo missionary, stopping over in Kansas City to visit, had attended a revival where Mr. Gordon, an evangelist, was attracting vast crowds; that she organized a choir and conducted the singing for two weeks, and at the end of the meetings saw how much good she could do at home. There was a significant gap in the evidence — but Flora's ability to put two and two together filled it with the surmise that but three weeks elapsed between their meeting and their marriage. No wonder Williams was neglected.

"But I must get the baby home, my dear. We have another service at two o'clock. Do come to see me to-morrow, when we can have a gossipy chat about all the old friends."

She tucked in a corner of the baby's afghan while her husband went forward to open the door.

"You may be interested to know," she confided, "that he is the best husband in the world. He has given up evangelism. He thinks so much more good can be accomplished by every-day contact with people. And by the way, your parting gift, 'For personal use only,' purchased my wedding dress. Yes, dear, I am coming. I will look for you to-morrow, then."

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The Green that Walked.*

BY JOHN L. CONSIDINE.

APTAIN," said the man on Post No. 13, "I'd like to be relieved. A couple of weeks' rest might put me right again."

"What's the matter? Sick?"

"Not exactly that, Captain. It's my eyes: I've been seeing things."

The captain of the guard eyed the man sharply.

"Been drinking?"

"No, sir. It's not that—no pink rats, nor blue monkeys, nor anything of that sort. The fact is," and here he lowered his voice to the level of a confidential whisper, although the nearest man was the guard on Post No. 12, three-score yards away, "I've been seeing the grass walk."

"What's that?" snapped the captain.

"It's a fact, sir. I didn't pay so much attention to it at first, but now that it's happened three times, I'm beginning to think that my eyes are going back on me, or else that I'm getting hallucinations."

The captain looked at Guard No. 13 in dismay. Hitherto he had regarded this man as one of his sanest and steadiest subordinates.

"Tell me about it," he commanded.

"There's nothing to it, much, except that every afternoon a patch of grass out there in the alfalfa field begins to move slowly toward the south. At first I thought it was the bay breeze, rolling through the grass, but then, I recollected, its wave was toward the bay. Besides, it seemed to me that this grass just picked itself up in a patch, and moved along, independent of the grass around."

"Does this movement always start from the same point?"

"No; each day it begins a little further south."

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"Hum! A little closer to the south — a little closer to the bay, that is. At any regular time?"

"Why, I hadn't thought of that. Yes; let me see. Yes, I believe it was at the same time each afternoon. From half-past two to three, say."

The captain glanced at his watch.

"It's 2:35 now," he said. "Do you see anything?"

The guard peered long and carefully to the southward.

"Yes, sir," he responded. "It's on me again — the grass moves."

"Where?" inquired the captain.

The guard pointed to a spot near where the alfalfa field met the fence-line. Sure enough, as it seemed to the captain, a patch of green, probably six feet in length and three in width, was making speedy progress in the direction of the fence.

"Take aim," shot from the captain's lips. "Can you hit it?"

The guard raised his rifle, but with shaking hands.

"Let me have it," cried the other, with a scornful gesture.

Steeling his nerves, the guard fired. The grass was still.

The captain ran down the stairs, and toward it. Regardless of possible reprimand, the guard followed. Arrived at the spot, the officer stooped to lift, and examine, an ingenious contrivance. It consisted of two layers of burlap sacking, the upper one bearded with grass. The space between had been filled with loam, and from this, planted in wheat, the green blades had forced their way through the loosely-guarded interstices of the upper piece of cloth.

While the captain surveyed with admiration undisguised this novel garb of living green, the form of its designer, a man in stripes, with shaven head, lay at his feet.

And beside the body, stricken with vain regret, knelt Guard No. 13.

"The first I ever killed," he muttered dumbly. "May God forgive me!"

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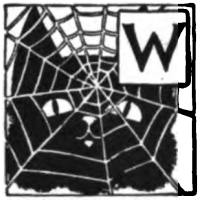
The Quest of the Signet.*

BY ALBERT W. TOLMAN.



HY should John Barrington pay a civil engineer five pounds a day and expenses to accompany him to India? I had answered his advertisement in the *Times,* and received the compliment of being selected from forty-odd applicants. But up to the day of sailing he had told me nothing about my work.

"A mere oversight," thought I. "He is busy with his preparations. He will tell me on the steamer."

But he didn't. I found him a generous employer, a pleasant companion, capital at a song or a story, not averse to cigars or cards, in short, a cheerful, whole-souled English gentleman. He talked freely of everything in the world save himself and his plans. On these points he was deaf and dumb. The wider I opened my eyes and ears, the tighter he shut his mouth. I knew nothing at London, at Bombay I knew still less. But the Bank of England notes crisped under my fingers promptly at each week-end, and why should I complain?

I never saw a man change as Barrington did the day he reached India. Cheerfulness fell from him like a mask. He reincarnated as the personification of gloom and silence.

I was just unlocking my trunk in my room at the Royal in Bombay, when he tapped and stumbled in. His face was mottled paste, his knees knocked together, he was in the bluest of funks. Handing me a telegram, he collapsed on a chair, muttering:

"If the steamer had been a day late!"

The message said:

"Come."

"Our train leaves in forty minutes," gasped Barrington, and went out. It was no use unpacking. I turned my trunk key

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back again, and met him at the station. Presently we were rumbling northeast.

Ah, India, mother of mysteries! many are thy unsolved riddles, but from Indus to Brahmaputra, from the Himalayas to Ceylon, amidst all thy teeming millions, prince or ryot, pariah or saint, juggler or Brahmin, was none more mysterious than the man whose gold I fingered and whose salt I ate.

As we rolled on through purgatorial days and nights, his lineaments, once so pleasant, underwent a gradual change. His jaw grew grimmer and more determined, his cheeks hollowed, dark circles rimmed his blood-flecked eyes, he spoke in monosyllables or not at all. He had become a man of ice and stone and iron.

His glaring eye saw something I could not see. He was in the grip of an idea that, unmastered, would destroy him, body and soul.

When a man neither talks, eats, drinks nor sleeps, you can't take much pleasure in his company. I was earning my five pounds a day now, and not enjoying it either.

Above all it was evident that Barrington was feverishly eager to reach his destination. The last hundred miles we made with a private car and special engine along a branch line at the base of the Himalayas. He interviewed the locomotive-driver before starting, and I caught the glint of gold passing from hand to hand. Whether that had anything to do with our speed I was not sure, but we made our last century at a tremendous pace.

The mighty peaks above us were crimsoning with sunset, as we panted up to the little terminal station. Two horses stood there, saddled and waiting. Barrington flung himself on one, I mounted the other, and we dashed off at a gallop.

Up, up, up, ever up! Over steep, narrow roads, rocky trails and native bridges, again and again holding our lives in our finger-tips.

Two hours, and another relay waited us. Two more, and a third. Barrington led, like a man perfectly familiar with the route. An insane dread of some invisible peril seemed to spur him on. The farther we got, the faster he wanted to go.

"If we should be too late," he kept muttering.

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At midnight, under a full unclouded moon, we emerged suddenly from a pine forest upon a rock-strewn slope. Above towered the land of perpetual snow. Before us, white and tall, gleamed the end of a great glacier. At its edge the blaze of a campfire fell upon pitched tents.

My companion pulled in his sweating horse. I reeled, saddle-sore. My muscles were aching, my eyes and brain were dull from want of sleep.

Troll-like, from the ground sprang a brown man, and laid hand on Barrington's bridle. Excitement flamed in his eyes, his voice trembled.

"They have come," said he, "at last."

"They have been long in coming," replied my employer.

"To-morrow is the day," continued the Hindu. "I feared thou mightest not be here."

"Only death could have kept me," answered Barrington, dismounting. "Lead on, Ramon."

We followed the Hindu over the débris at the foot of the glacier. A hundred feet below, the slope terminated abruptly in a sheer cliff above a black ravine, into which the water from the melting ice fell with a distant murmur.

At the centre of the wall Ramon halted.

"Behold!" exclaimed he, pointing toward the ice. We looked in the clear radiance of the moon.

At first I could distinguish only three dark shadows inside the crystal cliff; but, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, I made out the figures of three men.

They were embedded in solid ice about two feet from the surface. I saw at once that the central figure was that of an Englishman. His face was burned dark, and his aquiline nose was an exact counterpart of Barrington's. On the little finger of his left hand, which extended slightly forward, was a large seal ring. The other men, about a yard on either side of him, were evidently natives.

I gazed in speechless wonder. Barrington, too, looked with equal interest, as one who sees for the first time. Then the Hindu broke the silence, salaaming, saluting the motionless central figure:

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"Hail, lord! Expected one, hail! Thou hast come at last. Thy way has been long and silent and dark and cold. Five summers has thy servant watched for thee. And now his task is over."

His words roused Barrington. He turned to me.

"Allow me," he said, "to present my grandfather, Sir Reginald Clonmel. I have never seen him before; but, as an heir in the direct line, I may presume to introduce him. Pardon him, if his welcome seem somewhat cold. I am sorry we cannot ask him to the fire, and offer him refreshment; but, as that is out of the question, we can do the next best thing by partaking of it ourselves."

His grandfather! Unless I was greatly mistaken, the dead man was at least ten years younger than Barrington.

Spat! Something smashed into the ice over our heads, and a report rang out from the dark pine slope across the ravine. Spat! Spat! Barrington pulled me hastily back toward the camp; but he showed no surprise. The moment we withdrew from the front of the glacier the firing ceased.

"So!" said my companion, coolly. "The Duke compliments me. He thinks I am not so mad after all. He has more brains than I credited him with."

To me he remarked:

"Those bullets came from England."

We returned to the fire, and Ramon changed from the herald of the dead to the best of chefs and butlers. Soon the coffee bubbled cheerfully above the crackling wood. Ere long we broke our fast on broiled deer-steaks, unheeding the frozen men entombed in the groaning glacier, and the tiger yelling above the sough of the pines far below.

It was a strange midnight feast in that Himalayan gorge, under the cold moon and stars. I stole frequent glances at the Hindu and my employer. Were they not a brace of madmen? Was I not mad myself? But I was fearfully hungry and tired. So I ate without comment.

The meal over, Barrington looked at his watch. It was past one o'clock. He turned to me.

"You saw the signet ring on my grandfather's little finger?"

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I nodded.

"To get that ring I have come from England. It is of incalculable value to me, not for its own worth, though that is very great, but for a certain paper contained in a hollow beneath the stone. My father died of a broken heart for want of what that paper proves, for to him it was irrevocably lost. If I do not recover it, I shall never return to England, but shall go down with my grandfather into that ravine, which will be our family tomb."

He paused.

"It's a long story, and we're both tired. I'll tell it to you to-morrow,— after I get the ring. Sleep well. Good-night."

He indicated one of the tents. Outside sat the Hindu, rifle across his knees.

"I will watch," said he.

I entered, and lay down on my pallet. Between dead men upright in glaciers, grandsires younger than their children's children, and bullets that came five thousand miles, my head was whirling. But I was utterly weary, and soon fell asleep.

A loud explosion brought me to my feet. I rushed outside. It was morning, and the sun had already risen. High in the still blue an eagle was floating. Grand, snowy peaks, rosy in the dawn, towered all about us.

Barrington and the Hindu were gazing at the glacier. The sound that had roused me was the splitting open of a fresh crevasse. I noted that the ice had advanced two feet during the night.

On the slope before the entombed men rose a six-foot barricade of stones. My two companions had evidently improved the hours of darkness after moon-set. It was perfectly quiet across the gorge. The black pines came down close to the brink of the precipice. No human being was in sight, but I suspected that some one lurked behind the close trunks.

Said Barrington:

"Let us bid good-morning to my ancestor."

We stepped out toward the barricade. Was the unseen marksman on the watch? Answering my thought, a bullet sang across the ravine.

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"Our friend is faithful to his post," observed Barrington nonchalantly. "He must have breakfasted early, if at all. A poor marksman, however! The Duke should have hired a better. But he was always close. His economy in this case may cost him his dukedom."

Safely behind the barricade we examined the figures in the sunlight. The flawless crystal revealed them, to the slightest detail. Again I noted how remarkably the central figure resembled Barrington; indeed, it might have been a younger brother.

My employer interrupted my observations.

"And now to business," said he. "I want you, as an engineer, to give me your opinion on the best way to get that ring. At any cost we must recover it to-day, and that before the sun rises too high. Great changes may take place in the glacier at any moment. Should another crevasse open above, the whole front may slide into the ravine, and the ring be hopelessly lost. We must remember, too, our friend across the way. Pity we had no time to raise the barricade higher."

I took account of the situation. The ice was already steaming in the hot eastern sun. The glacier was set on a hair-trigger—it would not do to jar it with axe-strokes. Then, too, there were the bullets! I straightened up incautiously, and one slit my hat. The fellow was not so bad a marksman after all.

We hurried back to the tents, accelerated by two or three bullets. I made a détour to the top of the glacier. The fresh crevasse had an ominous look. Besides, a little back from the edge of the ice-cliff hung a rock weighing several tons. I returned and reported to Barrington.

"To work under there will peril your life; that rock may fall at any second."

He made a gesture of impatience.

"You know how cheaply I hold my life, if I do not get that ring. What I want is—"

A terrible grinding interrupted him. The glacier moved forward about two yards, overthrowing the barrier. For an instant it appeared about to slide into the ravine. Barrington uttered a cry of despair.

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The motion stopped. He seized a hunting knife. I put my hand on his shoulder.

"What are you going to do?" I asked. He shook me off roughly.

"Get the signet," he replied.

I tightened my grasp; I was stronger than he.

"You shall not go to certain death."

"Ramon!" he cried, angrily. A rifle-muzzle touched my neck. I turned, and looked into the cold black orbs of the Hindu.

"Let him go!" commanded Ramon; and I did. Barrington darted forward.

"You shall pay for this, if you have made me lose my only chance!" he screamed, as he flew over the rough slope below the glacier. A fusillade broke from across the gorge. We caught a glimpse of a figure in khaki dodging behind a large pine.

Ramon pushed a rifle into my hands.

"Shoot, shoot!" cried he; and we sent bullet after bullet toward the tree that concealed the marksman.

Meanwhile Barrington was slashing away at the ice before the entombed figures. Fragments from the summit dropped around him; the huge rock seemed about to fall. Despite our attempts to stop him the man across the gorge was pumping bullets like a Gatling; we could see the ice splinter about Barrington. Once he staggered, as if hit, but recovered himself, and kept on working.

The stranger's eagerness made him careless — he exposed a shoulder. I put a bullet through it. He dropped his gun, and sprang out, disclosing a tall figure with a yellow beard. Ramon, before I could stop him, fired again. The man threw up his arms, fell headlong toward the brink of the cliff, and dropped out of sight.

The glacier was tottering; it would surely fall in a few seconds. Even the stolid Ramon, realizing this, added his shriek to mine:

"Back! Back!"

Barrington had worked feverishly, not heeding the shots. I think he did not even know when they ceased. The prize was now within his grasp. With one final slash he severed the

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finger, and darted toward us, just as the enormous mass lurched forward. Safety was near, when he stumbled and fell. At the risk of his own life Ramon dragged him back, while the entire front of the glacier thundered down into the ravine, burying the body of the stranger beneath thousands of tons of ice and rock.

In his tent Barrington carefully removed the signet from the freshly bleeding finger. He pried out the stone. In a little cavity beneath lay a tightly folded sheet of thin tissue. With shaking hands he smoothed this out. As he read the words it bore, his face became the face of the man who has fought, and after years of struggle has won.

"Seventy years ago," said he, "my grandfather, Sir Reginald Clonmel, accompanied by native guides, was exploring the Rawal Glacier several miles north of here. While crossing a deep, narrow crevasse, thinly covered with snow, he suddenly disappeared with two of his men. There was no possible way of recovering the bodies, or even of locating the spot, as a three-days' storm of terrible severity obliterated all trace of the crevasse.

"Before leaving England on this fatal trip my grandfather had fallen in love with a beautiful young girl, the daughter of a London tradesman. It was the old story. His relatives did not consider her family high enough in the social scale, and so opposed his marriage. Nevertheless they were married secretly before my grandfather embarked. Three months after his death a son, my father, was born.

"The death of the clergyman who had performed the ceremony, and the destruction of the parish records by interested parties, made it impossible for my grandmother to enforce her claim to Sir Reginald's title and estate. The only existing documentary proof of their wedding was a tissue copy of the certificate, contained in a secret compartment of the ring which she had given her husband. And that ring had gone down with him into the depths of the Rawal.

"So Sir Reginald's brother succeeded to his estate, and treated our branch of the family as impostors.

"Before my father died, he told me of this ring and what

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it contained. You can surmise the rest. I knew that a glacier flowed like a river, and that in time whatever fell into its upper course would emerge at its end. For years I studied the Rawal. The work fascinated me, for somewhere in the ice under my feet was my grandfather with his signet.

"Taking all things into account, I figured that Sir Reginald would appear during the present summer, though not so early by a full month. I had set Ramon here to watch, with orders to heliograph the news from the peak above to the nearest telegraph station. You know the rest. This is the only day in all eternity when I could have succeeded.

"By the way," he continued, "describe the man whom Ramon shot."

I did so. Barrington listened intently. Then he spoke.

"I was mistaken in one thing: Those bullets did not come from England. Instead, they were fired by the duke in person, — the ex-duke I should say. He was watching the glacier, too. He was keener and bolder than I thought. I do not blame him. An English dukedom is a prize well worth fighting for. Had he been a better shot, he would still be duke, and I—"

He shrugged his shoulders and glanced toward the ravine, then up at the glorious mountain, piercing white in the sunlight.

"There are worse places for a tomb than the terminal of the Rawal. They have a magnificent monument."

"Sir Reginald's finger I shall preserve in alcohol, and take home to be placed in an urn in my family vaults. And now to something more cheerful."

He drew from his pocket the miniature of a beautiful woman.

"Let me show you my affianced wife, the future Duchess of Clonmel."

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Where the Lines Meet.*

BY FRANK X. FINNEGAN.

[Here is a typical BLACK CAT story, which appeared in this magazine five years ago. It is reprinted at the request of many friends, one of whom, Mr. A. E. Snyder of Seattle, supplements his request by the following interesting letter, which shows how a simple Fact may be Profitably utilized as the foundation for Fascinating Fiction. The author of the story received a cash prize of $100: Department of the Interior, General Land Office, Washington, D. C., April 22, 1908. Mr. A. E. Snyder, Seattle, Washington. Sir: I am in receipt of your letter dated April 5, 1908, making inquiry as to whether or not the States of Colorado and Utah and the Territories of Arizona and New Mexico come together at exactly one point. In reply you are advised that the southwest corner of Colorado, the northwest corner of New Mexico, the northeast corner of Arizona and the southeast corner of Utah are defined by a single point known as the "four corners" which is marked upon the ground by a stone mound in the centre of which is the corner stone 7 x 7 inches, firmly set in the ground. Very respectfully, Fred Dennett, Commissioner.]

THERE is a spot in the southwestern part of this country where a man may stand at one moment upon the soil of two States and two Territories; where, if he moves but a step in either direction, he may be entirely within the boundaries of one commonwealth, with another lying beneath his eyes and the two Territories so close that his shadow, cast by the noonday sun, may fall on both of them. In all the broad expanse of the United States, with its hundreds of State lines crossing one another, there is no other place where this is possible. It was toward this spot that a man on a jaded cow pony rode through a driving storm one April night. His broad-brimmed hat was pulled well down to protect his face from the beating rain, and the reins hung loose upon the horse's drooping neck, for the cayuse knew the trail across the mesa better than its master in the blackness of the night.

To the rider's left the San Juan River, swollen to twice its normal width by the spring rains, roared and tumbled between its banks, and at times the horse splashed through a pool where the river had overflowed the trail, but the man paid little heed to the

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floundering footsteps of his horse and only pulled the collar of his rough coat more closely about his throat as he bowed before the increasing gale. At length the cayuse quickened its steps and raised its head as a twinkling light glimmered through the blackness far ahead. The man roused himself in sympathy with the livelier motion of his horse, the light caught his eye, and with an oath he brought his rawhide quirt down on the horse's flank as he stared through the darkness.

The surprised cayuse bounded forward with renewed energy and in a few minutes stopped before a rough shack, through the window of which the light was gleaming. The man threw himself from the horse, bounded to the door and flung it open. In the single room of the cabin he saw a heavily built, forbidding-looking man seated near a table, smoking and vainly trying by the light of the smoky lamp to read a soiled fragment of a month-old newspaper. He looked up when the door was burst open and surveyed the intruder calmly.

"Hello, Bill," he said after a moment, during which the two men stared at each other; "I was waitin' for you."

"I see you was," said the man at the door, "an' you seem to be makin' yourself at home while you're waitin'." In his astonishment he had forgotten his horse and he took a step inside the shack as if to escape the drenching rain and the wind which was roaring up from the southwest. Then he remembered that he had not yet given the animal shelter and he paused.

"Wait till I put the horse up," he said. "I'll be back."

"Oh, I know you will, Bill," said the man at the table, lightly. "I ain't afraid you're goin' to run away."

The rain-soaked man at the door hesitated as though to speak again, started out, turned again toward the man at the table, who smilingly surveyed his every move, and at last stepped outside, closed the door and led his tired horse to the lean-to behind the shack, where he tethered it for the night. By the time he had again reached the door of the cabin his features had undergone a decided change, and the surly look of defiance with which he had first met the smiling face of the other man had given place to an expression almost equally cheerful. He closed the door of the shack carefully, that the howling wind might not burst it open.

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crossed the room and seated himself on the edge of a tumbled bed near the western wall of the cabin. Watching the man near the table with a furtive smile he fished a blackened pipe from his pocket, rapped it on the edge of the bed, blew into it, and said:

"If you don't mind bein' obligin', I'd just as soon have a pipeful of that tobacco you're smokin'."

"Sure," said the man at the table, drawing out a greasy pouch. "Come an' take all you want."

The man on the bed eyed him narrowly a moment, knocked his pipe against his horny palm once or twice, and said:

"I'd rather you'd toss it over."

"What's the odds?" asked the man at the table, lightly, but he tossed the pouch over and his companion filled and lighted his pipe. When the blue clouds were adding their mite to the closeness of the atmosphere, the man at the table turned sharply to the man on the bed.

"Bill," he said, "I don't s'pose it'll take much talk from me to explain what I'm here for. I been lookin' for you for a month all over Montezuma County, an' I said to the boys I wouldn't come back without you. I sort of lost track of you for a spell until a cow puncher up near M'Elmo told me you had built this shack down here near the San Juan an' I come right on here to get you. Not findin' you at home, I made myself comfortable, knowin' you'd come sooner or later. Do you want me to tell you what I come for?"

"Sure," said Bill. "I know I never sent for you, Tom M'Kinney, an' I'd get along here powerful comfortable for a long time if you didn't make it no point to drop in on me."

"Well, maybe so," admitted M'Kinney, slowly; "but you see, Bill, my comin' ain't what the folks back in the States refer to as a social call. It's more connected with business, you know, Bill, seein' as how I've got in my pocket a warrant for the arrest of one Bill Gordon for the crime of horse stealin', contrary to the peace an' order of Montezuma County, Colorado. I reckon you won't deny that you're Bill Gordon, leastways not to me, that has knowed you for twelve years, an' I don't expect you're goin' to cut up rough about it, because you've knowed me the same length of time."

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Bill Gordon smoked thoughtfully a few moments, with the shadow of a smile on his features.

"No, Tom," he said at length, "I ain't goin' to deny that I'm Bill Gordon, but I'm sorry that you've come all this way in such bad weather just to tell me that, because you'll have to leave your warrant in your pocket an' go back without me."

The smile vanished from M'Kinney's face, giving way to a fierce glare which no whit dismayed the complacent Bill Gordon.

"I'll have to go back without you?" repeated M'Kinney. "Don't you reco'nize me as the sheriff of Montezuma County, State of Colorado?"

"Surely," said Gordon calmly, blowing a big cloud of smoke.

"Then I place you under arrest," thundered M'Kinney, rising with a hand upon the butt of his revolver as though in expectation of resistance.

Bill Gordon still continued to sit on the edge of the bed and smoke and he even smiled at the warlike move of the sheriff.

"No, you don't place me under no arrest, neither," he finally declared, looking fearlessly into the sheriff's eyes.

"Why don't I?" asked the surprised M'Kinney. Resistance he was ready for, but this calm and unmoved refusal of Bill Gordon to be arrested staggered him.

"Because," answered Gordon, with a final smile of triumph, "I ain't in Colorado!"

"You ain't *what?*" thundered the sheriff.

"I ain't in Colorado," repeated Gordon, with the same calm smile of assurance. "You are," he went on hastily, seeing that M'Kinney evidently thought he was insane, "but I ain't. You see, the line runs right through my shack. Bed's in Utah, chair is in Colorado. That nail keg over there is in Arizony and that old saddle in the other corner's in New Mexico. I'm on the bed, so I'm in Utah an' you can't serve no warrant in Utah, Tom. You'll admit that?"

"Sure, I admit that," said Sheriff M'Kinney in a dazed and uncertain way.

"Well, then," continued the imperturbable Gordon, "your warrant ain't no good. All I've got to do is to stay over here in Utah an' you can't touch me."

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"But — but how'd you know where the line was?" demanded the sheriff suspiciously. He had recovered from the first shock of surprise and was preparing for fight again. "How do I know this ain't a game you're puttin' up on me? I'd make a fine figure goin' back to M'Elmo with a yarn like that, wouldn't I? I'd be run out of town before I could resign."

"Lemme tell you about it," said Gordon, stretching himself comfortably on the bed. He was no longer in fear of the sheriff's warrant and was eager to expatiate upon his great scheme. "I seen it all set out in a newspaper about a month ago about this here place. I was up to Monticello, up here on the Utah side, you know, an' I found a newspaper kickin' around there what had all this in it. It told how the State lines of Colorado an' Utah an' Arizony an' New Mexico all come together in a bunch an' how four cowboys could sit on their horses an' hold hands an' all be in different States. An' it went on about how the cowboys had built up a pile of stones to mark the spot where all the four lines come together an' it had a picture of the pile of stones an' four men on horses all holdin' hands."

Bill paused to refill his pipe from the pouch beside him and as he did so he was reminded of the earlier incident of the evening.

"That's why I wanted you to toss me your tobacco," he said. "I didn't want to take a chance in Colorado for a minute."

"I wish I had knowed it then," grunted the sheriff. "I mightn't have been so obligin'."

"Well, I got to thinkin' about that thing," went on Gordon when the pipe was well alight, "an I got to wonderin' if that wouldn't be a handy place to live. You know, lots of fellows build their shacks on the line between two States because they may not want to stay in one State all the time. There is occasions when many a man wants to move along a little an' if he can do it by movin' across the room it saves lots of travelin'. But, thinks I, s'posin' a fellow has two visitors at once that wants to have a little chat with him, one from each State? Then what? thinks I. An' it struck me that if a fellow could live in about four States — not more than four — it might often come handy."

"There ain't no manner of doubt," interrupted Sheriff M'Kinney, "that it would for you, Bill."

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"I thought about that thing so much," went on Gordon, "that I came down here lookin' for that there pile of stones. An' I found 'em an' this here is the place. I built this shack around that pile of stones just as square as them fellows that lays out the railroad lines could make it. I took down the pile of stones because they was in the way, but this is the place, Tom, an' you can take my word for it. The bed's in Utah, the chair's in Colorado, the keg's in Arizony an' the saddle over there's in New Mexico. When I want to leave Colorado for a spell I mosey over an' sit on the nail keg in Arizony an' I go to bed in Utah every night I'm at home. You can see for yourself, Tom," concluded Gordon with the utmost good-nature, "that the scheme ain't a bad one; as, for example, right at present."

"No, it ain't a bad one," assented the sheriff, "only there's this about it, Bill, you can't stay over there in Utah forever, you know. S'posin' I was to hang around here until you got hungry an' wanted to get up a snack o' sunthin' to eat for yourself, you'd have to come over into Colorado to eat it an' then I'd nab you. You can't live on the bed, you know. Did you think of that?"

"Sure," said Gordon, with a quiet smile. "You see this window? It's on the Utah side of the house. I can go out this window an' go around to the corral an' get my horse without ever leavin' Utah, an' I can ride from there up into Utah or down into Arizony or around the front of the house into New Mexico an' you can't lay a hand on me, Tom. I can keep in one o' them places, you know, until you get tired an' go home. Oh, I've got it all thought out."

The Colorado sheriff was silent for a few minutes, wrapped in deep thought on the perplexing problem with which he was face to face. The storm still raged with unabated fury, the rain beat upon the flimsy roof of the cabin and the wind roared around the door and windows. Bill Gordon smoked steadily and regarded the sheriff with satisfied amusement until both men were startled by a hail from without.

"Hello, the house!" called a stentorian voice above the storm. Bill Gordon looked uneasily at the sheriff.

"'Pears like there's somebody out there in the rain," said M'Kinney.

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"I ain't lookin' for no visitors," answered Gordon. "This ain't no hotel."

The calls from without were repeated and finally succeeded by a sturdy rapping on the door of the shack. Gordon arose reluctantly, being careful not to cross the line passing through the centre of the little cabin, and unfastened the door. In a gust of wind and rain two bedraggled men stepped inside. Coming out of the pitchy darkness of the stormy night, they were dazzled for a moment by the lamplight and peered around the shack with winking eyes. Gordon took advantage of the circumstance to slip over into the corner and seat himself on the nail keg.

"Hello, Tom," cried one of the newcomers in surprise as he made out the features of the Colorado sheriff in the lamplight; "what you doin' here? We expected to find Bill Gordon. You waitin' for him too?"

"There's Bill, in the corner," replied Sheriff M'Kinney, and the two strangers turned in the direction indicated. Gordon was rocking himself lightly to and fro on the nail keg, still enjoying his smoke and with the same inscrutable smile on his features with which he had regaled the Colorado sheriff before acquainting him with his novel scheme for evading the law.

"Evenin', Jack," he said as the two turned toward him; "evenin', Buck. What brings you folks this way? Nothin' goin' wrong?"

"Well, I'll put up our horses while Jack tells you about it," said the man addressed as Buck, and he disappeared into the rain again. Jack looked rather awkwardly from one to the other of the men as though he did not exactly relish the situation in which he found himself.

"Before I say anything more," he began, addressing himself to Sheriff M'Kinney, "I want to know if Bill here is your prisoner. You got here first an,' of course, if he's under arrest, he's yours, an' we ain't got anything more to say."

"Well, no," said Sheriff M'Kinney; "to tell the truth, he ain't my prisoner."

"Good," said the drenched newcomer; "then we ain't had our trip for nothin'."

At that moment the man who had gone out to care for the horses returned and Jack greeted him gleefully.

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"It's all right, Buck," he said. "Sheriff M'Kinney says he hasn't arrested Bill; so one of us is sure to get him. You can take him if you want, because I know I can get him when you're through with him. Bill," he continued, turning to Gordon, who was listening with the same bored smile on his face, "I've got a warrant for you for runnin' off Dad Walters' three colts and Buck here has got another warrant for you for a case down in his county. Now, we both been lookin' for you for a long time an' when we heard you was located in a shack down here, we decided to come after you together. Here you are an' here we are, an' I don't s'pose you're goin' to make any fuss about it, are you, Bill?"

"No, I ain't goin' to make any fuss about it," said Gordon, with a sly wink at M'Kinney; "only I ain't goin' with any of you."

"You ain't?" repeated Jack fiercely, laying his hand upon a ponderous revolver. "We'll see about that!"

"Wait a minute, Jack," said Gordon in a soothing tone; "take it easy. You're sheriff of San Juan County, Utah, ain't you?"

"Certainly I am," replied Jack impatiently.

"An' Buck there is sheriff of San Juan County, New Mexico, ain't he?" went on Gordon.

"Oh, we all know that," said Buck, starting forward. "Let's stop this foolishness."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," warned Gordon, while M'Kinney industriously cleaned his pipe. "Now, neither one of you two sheriffs ever thought he had any right to serve warrants in Arizony, did you?"

"Arizona!" exclaimed Jack. "What are you talking about?"

"Only this," said Gordon, settling back, "That I'm in Arizony. Ask M'Kinney. He knows about it. Bed's in Utah, chair's in Colorado, keg's in Arizony and saddle's in New Mexico."

"What's all this about?" demanded the Utah sheriff, turning to the Colorado sheriff.

"I guess Bill's right," said Sheriff M'Kinney, "if he's tellin' the truth, an' I ain't got much reason to doubt that. We all know the State lines all cross down here somewheres an' Bill allows this is the spot. He found the pile of stones the fellows put up to mark it an' he built his shack around 'em. I guess he's got the best of it while he stays on the nail keg."

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The two outwitted sheriffs glared at Gordon, at M'Kinney and at each other in turn, and in the silence the storm could be heard roaring with redoubled fury. At length the New Mexico sheriff started impatiently.

"This is all nonsense," he said, sternly. "Here we are, three sheriffs, each with a warrant for this fellow. Any one of us can arrest him by main force. Are we all going to be bluffed by this yarn about the State lines?"

"You wouldn't want to do an illegal act like that, Buck," ventured Gordon, winningly. "Not you, Buck, in front of two witnesses. You know if you dragged me out of Arizony, where I'm sittin' so comfortable, an' took me away off into New Mexico, I could summons these two repertable officers to testify about it, Buck, an' they'd have to tell the truth, you know, about how you served your warrant outside your own State. It wouldn't do, you know, Buck," concluded Gordon, with exasperating impudence. The three sheriffs looked at one another in silence once more.

"No, I guess he's got us stalled," said Buck, at last, and Jack and M'Kinney solemnly shook their heads.

"I suppose we could stay here an' starve him out," suggested Jack. "He'd have to come out of Arizona some time."

"I want to get back when court opens to-morrow," said M'Kinney. "I've fooled away three weeks on this thing now."

"We might —" began Buck, when something happened. The howling blast struck the light shack with tremendous force, tore it from the earth and poised it on end for an instant, then hurled it to the north and east. The men fell in a heap with the table and the bed on top of them, but Sheriff M'Kinney had his eye on Gordon at the instant of the upheaval and had his hands on him as they all lay, half-stunned, in the wreckage.

"Bill," he breathed hoarsely into Gordon's ear, "we're in Colorado now. You're my prisoner!"

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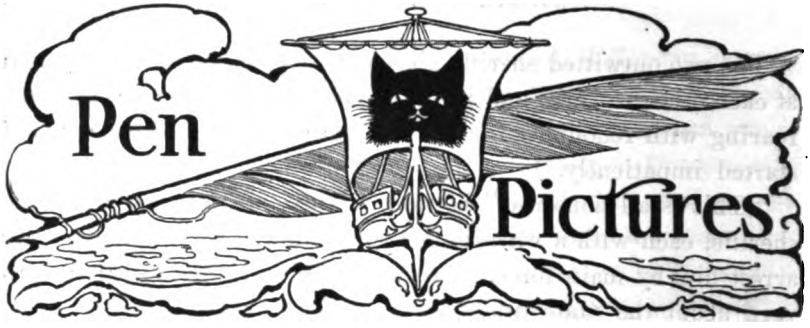

The Weirdest Land on Earth.*

No. I.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

An island with nearly a hundred million sheep — an island with the richest gold and silver mines in the world — an island with coal enough to supply the nations of the globe — an island as large as the United States — an island where tens of millions of dollars have been paid in a vain war against noxious animals — such is Australia, the weirdest land on earth.

The world knows little of this great gray island which sits cold and lonely on the fringe of the Pacific. The hum of the old-world centres comes to Australia in faint whispers. She is far from the heart of things. She is a land apart, silent, strange, and solemn.

To write of Australia is to write of the Bush. The globe-trotter thinks differently. He writes of the five chief cities of the continent, and ignores the grim interior. But the five state capitals are but five bright eyes in a weary wilderness.

The Bush *is* Australia. The Bush that the globe-trotter never sees — the Bush that runs its gray length of over two thousand miles from the Great Dividing Range to the Leuwin Light — the Bush that stretches for three hundred leagues between Port Darwin and The Bight — the Bush that watches silently round the tin-roofed cottages that make pitiful specks in its drab distances. The Australian writer recognizes this, but the Australian

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writer is not read outside of his own country. The world derives its general information regarding the Southern hemisphere from the person with the note-book who arrives by one steamer and leaves by the next. That person visits Melbourne during the Flemington Cup Carnival; visits Sydney when the wool kings come out of the Silence at Eastertime; sees Brisbane during a regatta, and leaves the Bush — the weird, watching, waiting Bush — to an imagination that dreads investigating it at close range.

It is the Land of Big Distances. The world seems wide when one stands in a pasture field fifteen miles square — when one wanders over a sheep ranch of one hundred and sixty thousand acres. The world seems cold and lonely when one rides sixty miles on horseback to attend his nearest neighbor's funeral. Australia has less than five million inhabitants, but there are over three million square miles for them to wander in. The gray wastes separate her little inland towns. An undefinable mystery broods over the dead heart of the interior. A sense of loneliness appals and disheartens one. No streams gurgle through the arid wastes. No sounds break the stillness. The funereal silence makes one's ears ache. It is the land of opposites, where the birds, though of gorgeous plumage, are songless; where the trees shed their bark instead of their foliage; where that unique feathered freak, the laughing jackass, startles the traveler with his harsh, demoniacal cackle. One finds weird combination of bird and animal in the duck-billed platypus; the emu and kangaroo are in keeping with their unnatural surroundings, and even the swan, as if conforming with the order of topsyturvydom, wears black plumage instead of a snowy coat.

Australia strikes the observer who shuts out details and looks at the country with a wide eye, as a land that has missed its springtime. To those who travel the country there remains but a blur of gray upon the mind's canvas. Energy is killed by the tropical heat. For nine months of the year the continent swelters; the remaining three months cannot repair the damage. King Drought leaves a track of sun-bleached bones as he sweeps through the land; the Fire Fiend pounces on the dried-up vegetation with five-mile lengths of flashing flame.

But over this strange land hangs a halo. Men have stubbed

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their toes against nuggets of gold as big as their heads. Fortunes have been made in a single day at Bendigo, Ballarat, Charters Towers, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie. The largest lumps of yellow gold that the world has ever seen have been dug out of the dried-up watercourses.

And she is the Land of the Golden Fleece. Fire and Drought do their worst, but the wool king fights bravely. The white eyed crow, dingo, rabbit and kangaroo come like plagues upon the sheep runs, but, in spite of all, the big island sends over two hundred and fifty million pounds of wool from its shores yearly! The vitality of the land is remarkable.

The task of populating Australia is the one that confronts her statesmen. In London the Agents-General of the different states offer special inducements to the British farmer, but the British farmer is coy. The state governments offer to take him the sixteen thousand miles round the Cape for forty dollars, but he does not leap at the offer. He is afraid. Although obtuse and unimaginative, he senses the loneliness of the great island, and he crams himself into the hold of an Atlantic liner bound for American ports in preference to the long trip to the Land of the Southern Cross. The big island calls him and he does not come. The gray plains remain unpopulated, the dead heart of the country remains unconquered, and Australia remains the Land of the Solemn Silence, while Drought and Fire wave their bloody banners over the interior.

NOTE. — The March issue of THE BLACK CAT will contain a second Pen Picture of the Weirdest Land on Earth. It will deal with the sheep-breeders' battle against living foes and present facts and figures so appalling as to defy belief.

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"CATECHISMS"

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

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I am to give a luncheon at which a member of the Indian football team is to be the guest of honor. Can you suggest something unique in the way of appropriate entertainment? At a similar function recently given by a local lady to friends of the U. P. D. Road, miniature railroad tracks made of sticks of licorice, with toothpicks as cross ties, and running from the centre of the table to tiny red lanterns at each plate, proved a great hit. The idea was given her by the Epicure Editor of the Home Journal. As I am considered clever and ambitious I should dearly love to present something equally fetching.

ILENE HELENE.

Your question becomes a problem because, not since the discovery of the Nursing Bottle, has anything occurred that appealed so happily to the Hungry as the railroad idea you quote. It embodies the very epitome of epicurean elegance and deserves to be stuffed and mounted. At the same time it opens an avenue of possibilities as picturesque as perplexing. When, for example, you consider that your prospective guest might be a doctor or an undertaker you will congratulate yourself that you are merely to entertain a Kicker. It is therefore in honor of your coming chief that the following suggestion is offered. Take an ordinary water bucket. Fill it with pink lemonade and place in the centre of the dining table, which should be chalk-marked to represent a football field. Conceal the bucket under a tepee made of bark, leaving an opening for ladling out the liquid. In large letters of bright red tinsel label the tepee FIRE WATER. Now with deft fingers fashion from bits of hand-painted chamois skin and tufts of hair, contributed by members of your family and servants, tiny scalps representing souvenirs from college girls and football heroes and strew these carelessly over the table. By the aid of a darning ball make, from boots discarded by father and brother, small footballs, one for each guest. Decorate these with war bonnets made from bright rooster feathers, and fill with bonbons. In small birch-bark canoes serve arrow-shaped doughnuts with Indian pudding and tomahawk-shaped red beet pickles.

I am told that I have lovely hair, particularly when it is done in a Marcelle Wave. But the young man who is paying me attentions, while he is a perfect gentleman, is a dreadfully poor sailor. He is so sensitive in that respect that when he sees my Marcelle Wave he invariably becomes seasick. Please tell me how I can keep my Wave and not lose Willie? MARIE.

On evenings when the young man calls, calm the wave by pouring oil — hair oil — on it. This should obviate Willie's seasickness or at least make the attacks less violent.

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How tight may a partner hold me in dancing? I am eighteen.
ANNE.

Thousands of godfearing maidens have gone to their graves with this question on their lips and still the echo comes back — How tight? While the Dancing Editor of the *Home Journal* contends that the moment you feel yourself held tight you must drop your arm and cease dancing, the *Scientific American* believes that so sudden a shock may cause heart failure and insists that your life is in danger unless your partner holds you so tight that he cannot lose you. The *Christian Watchman*, on the other hand, warns you that the more tightly a partner holds you in his arms the more lightly he holds you in his esteem. All this is interesting. So is your age. But the question is not, "How old is Anne?" but "How tight is Anne to be held?"

A Kennebunkport father of seven daughters, all of whom have been bothered a great deal by being held too tight or not tight enough, has at last solved the perplexing problem so that every dancer can decide the question for herself. This man has invented a Dancing Grip Regulator, which is not only simple, safe and sure, but absolutely sin-proof, as it enables every dancing girl to make known to her partner beforehand the exact degree of tightness she will stand for. The ingenious device, which, by the way, is constructed upon purely scientific principles, consists of a strip of patented gauze, woven of silver wire and charged with electricity. This forms a lining for the belt or waist and by means of a tiny concealed wire is connected with the Dial-faced Regulator, which is not unlike a watch in appearance and is worn as an ornament over the heart, near the shoulder, or may nestle among the filmy flouncy finery at the vertex of the corsage. Concealed under the dial, which is numbered in units of five from 0 to 50 and contains an arrow-shaped indicator, is a bell whose shrill notes are instantly sounded by undue pressure upon the silvery lining of the danseuse. Now it follows as naturally as a cat follows a mouse that any lady armed with this remarkable discovery has her dancing partner just where she wants him. If, for example, she be cast with one whom she loathes, she simply sets the indicator at 0, which limits her partner to the fishy, clammy hold of hatred. The moment he exceeds this limit the bell shrieks its note of warning and he is stung. Again, if paired with her brother or husband, she gives him his cue by setting the tell-tell arrow at, say 5, which calls for the finger grip of semi-indifference and painful duty. On the other hand, by moving the index to 40 or even 50 when she finds herself in the arms of an affinity or soul mate, it simply becomes, in the language of the poet, a case of "On, on with the dance. Let Joy be unconfined." It must be added that for the benefit of engaged couples a special attachment is added to the Regulator which completely muffles the bell. This style costs more.

That a fortune awaits the man at Kennebunkport is an assured fact. All who have tested his invention are a unit in their enthusiastic praise. Among the number is a Baptist minister at Free Haven who, after exhaustive personal experiments with the sisters of his flock, pronounces it a greater discovery than cow's milk. Ground has already been broken and capital enlisted to place this boon within the reach of the entire dancing world.

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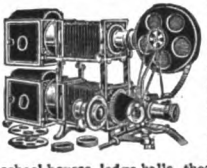

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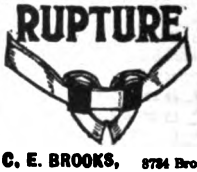

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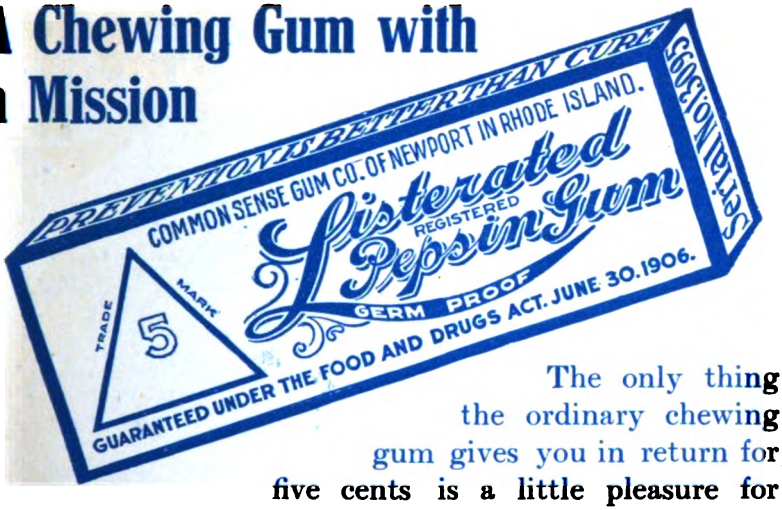

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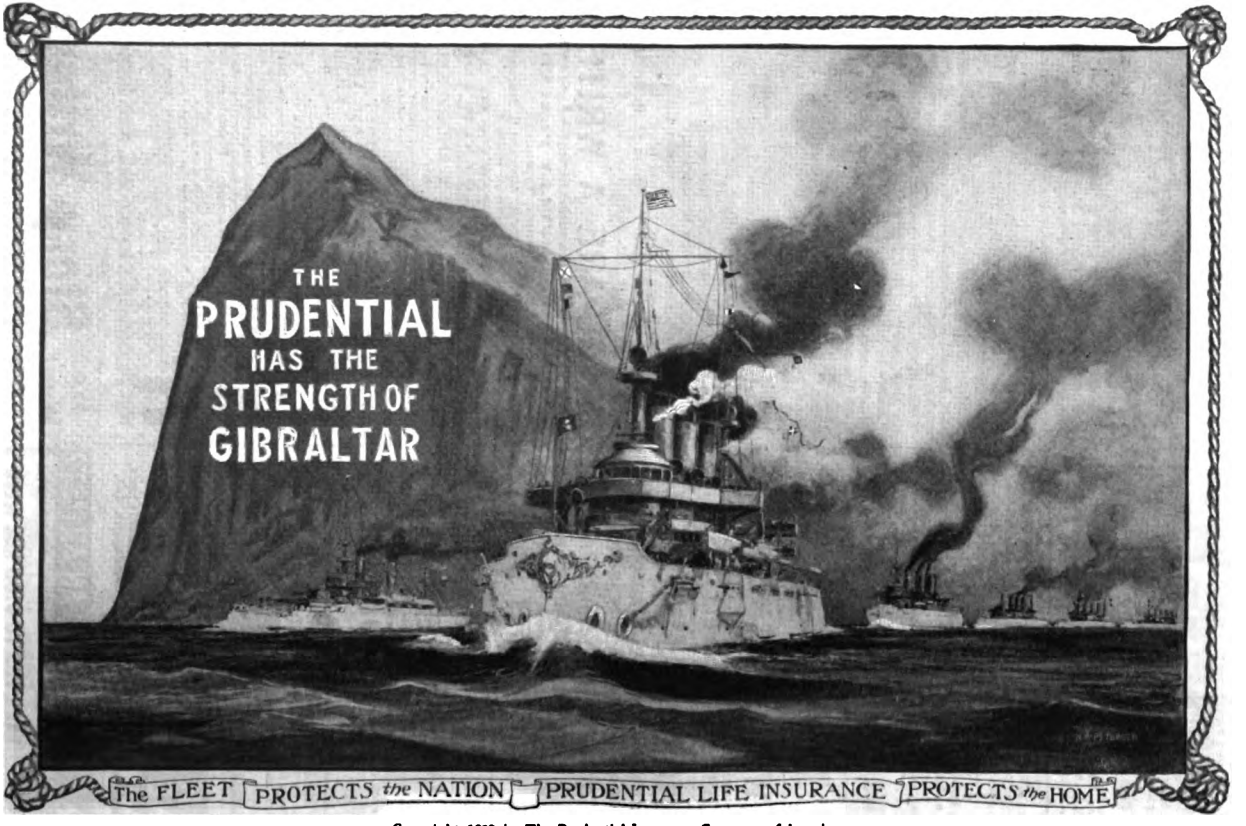

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Nathan.*

BY C. STEPHEN BRADD.

IT was, I think, on the 6th day of December, at my farm near Ladysmith, South Africa, that the letter arrived from Sir Arthur Meredith. Sir Arthur and I had been very close friends for many years, indeed, ever since early Oxford days, and a letter from him with news of himself was always very welcome. But this letter contained little about himself. After a conventional line or two, he entered on the business which was evidently the main purpose of his letter:

> I wish to announce to you that I am sending you a present. You will be rather perplexed when you hear what it is. And yet I make bold to say beforehand that it is the most valuable present I have ever made you. It is nothing more than a servant — a black servant — I might say a slave, but I know how you dislike the term. His name is Nathan. He has been with me for some time as a very close body-servant. I picked him up in the interior, on one of my expeditions, about four years ago. My only recommendation of him is that I have never had nor seen any body-servant whose fidelity would bear a comparison with his. And this, too, is my only ground for asserting the superior value of this gift to you. I emphasize the *only* ground, because, to tell you the truth, this one gift — a golden one indeed — fidelity, begins and ends the list of our Nathan's accomplishments: since he is, first of all, deformed and furiously ugly; secondly, he is stone dumb, and is acquainted with only the most

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> meagre sign-language; and, thirdly, he is endowed with positively nothing more than the merest animal wits (if the term isn't a contradiction) and I am convinced he was born this way.
>
> I pause for a moment while you gasp away your astonishment, and read these lines over again, and fret with impatience to ask me ten questions of explanation. I answer all those questions at once by repeating what I said about the fidelity of Nathan. I have nothing but this to emphasize. I must add, too, that Nathan is becoming somewhat unfit to stay with me. He is growing old, and you know what a flying-camp life I and my "followers" live from year to year. I know he will have a quiet, comfortable home at your place near Ladysmith. Let me repeat once more that I am sure Nathan will be of the greatest value to you. And, indeed, if experience should prove anything to the contrary, do not hesitate to send Nathan back to me at once.

After all this followed some instructions, detailed with care, about sending to Ladysmith to receive Nathan when he arrived and escort him home. Then Meredith's letter ended abruptly; but this was not *quite* the end, for a postscript was added, containing only a line or two, and reading as follows :

> By the way, if it should happen for any reason that you should grow so interested in Nathan that you would like to be informed about his birth and antecedents, write me, and, as soon as I can reach you by mail, I will let you have all the information you wish in that line — family history, lineage, pedigree, etc., etc.

Such was his letter. And it puzzled me quite a little. It was not the fact of his sending me one of his cast-off blacks. I knew he kept a perfect horde of these, who followed him on his long expeditions in the cause of his science, which was in the naturalist line — I might remark here that in the last few years, since the writing of this memoir, Sir Arthur's contributions have received very distinguished notice — but, as I say, it was not the sending me one of his swarthy followers that made me wonder. It was his making such a time over it. He might have settled it in a line and a half, and then gone on with a few scraps of news about himself — especially since his letters were such rare luxuries to me, — but to devote an entire letter for the purpose of telling me that he was sending me a withered, worn-out Ethiopian — that seemed rather strange. I thought I was through it all, however, after a little reflecting. This black had probably done him some remarkable service, saved his life, perhaps — which was not at all unlikely in the midst of snake-jungles and with frequent brushes with in-

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land tribes. And now the faithful old fellow was growing old, and toothless, and Sir Arthur had some delicacy about letting him fall into any chance hands, and wanted to find a place where he could turn him loose to graze out his last few years in peace and with kind treatment. So Sir Arthur settled on me at my farm near Ladysmith. I didn't feel at all offended at this liberty. I was willing to take the old fellow and feed him and treat him kindly. But what I couldn't see was why Meredith did not speak out honestly, and say that all he wanted was to provide a quiet asylum for his old black, instead of regaling me with all this nonsense about sending me a present and so on.

Then when it came to that postscript, the mystery deepened for a moment. How in the name of everything civilized could I ever grow so interested in a black servant as to inquire about his pedigree! Then the whole thing brightened into a joke. Meredith was making a little quiet game of me, from a safe distance in his solitary jungle camp. I tried to smile it off — but it did not entirely satisfy me, and I looked forward with some little curiosity to the arrival of this acquisition to my household.

I remember that I sent two of my fellows into Ladysmith next day, with full directions as to the taking charge of the invaluable Nathan. Meredith was sending in that month a large party of his followers to the Natal metropolis, as he did two or three times a year, to purchase supplies of all kinds for him, after which they would, by making an overland journey of some hundred and fifty miles, join him again in the interior. With this party Nathan was to arrive. It was not until evening — for they rested during the mid-day hours to escape the sun, that the ox-cart returned from town. I was taking supper alone on the veranda when one of the servants announced that the new man had arrived. I answered that I would be ready presently, and, after leisurely finishing my supper, I strolled over to the "quarters" to have a look at the new arrival. There he was standing at the entrance of one of the cabins, leaning rather lazily against the door post. The first thing about him that impressed me was his appearance of extreme age. I had expected a man, not in the bloom of youth (for his usefulness was supposed to have gone), but here was even a trifle more than I had looked for. He seemed literally crushed with the

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weight of years. He was stooped so low that I think it would have been physically impossible for him to get down any lower and remain on the soles of his feet. Then his whole form gave me the strong impression of extreme shrunkenness. His wrists protruding from his sleeves were fleshless sticks, while his trousers flapped in a peculiar way, which made me feel painfully the thinness of his legs.

I smiled a little grimly to myself as I took in these details. "The value of Meredith's gift does not precisely dawn on me yet," I muttered. "As far as I can see, this old chap will have to be treated with gruel and a soft bed at once — while we get a cedar box ready for him in the near future. Why, he hasn't strength enough to pull a long breath."

As I drew quite near to him the old fellow raised his head. His face had been entirely hidden, partly by his broad-brimmed hat, which belongs to the outfit of a South African open-air negro, and partly by the inclination of his form which, as I said, was extreme, — but now I caught a fair look at it. And what a face! Meredith was certainly mild in merely calling him ugly. It was — well — the most hideous face I had ever seen. "Age has certainly used you up badly," I thought. The face seemed to be made up of wrinkles, like a piece of loose shrunken leather. But that wasn't the only disfigurement. Everything there was made in the worst possible way; the eyes were small and bearish; the nose was beaten flat; while the nostrils were large and for all the world like ugly bullet-holes. The mouth was very broad, with a protruding upper and lower jaw. But I can't describe him. I can only say he was certainly furiously ugly — inhumanly ugly!

I stood looking at him for a few seconds without manifesting any surprise, as the matter of his personal looks was a rather indifferent one to me. Then I endeavored to put on as cheerful a tone as I could, and said something about being glad to see him and that I hoped he would be satisfied here. At once I was reminded about his being dumb, and the possessor of the minimum of wits. He looked at me with the blankest possible stare, and merely gave me a kind of grunt — meaningless enough.

And then there happened what I could no more explain to myself at the time, than I could have flown with wings. As I stood,

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with my eyes fixed upon the old black, a feeling of intense revulsion and disgust for him took hold of me so strong that it almost shook me with its vehemence. I am the most phlegmatic man in the world, and yet that feeling for a moment seemed to control me absolutely — the shrinking as well as the loathing inspired by that poor old deformed creature. I felt for a second as if I should in duty wipe him off from the face of the earth. I remember distinctly how my hand reached towards the heavy revolver which I carry at my side, and then how, as my folly flashed upon me, I tightened my belt to cover up the gesture. I did not stand debating long; but turned sharp on my heel and walked back to the house. As I walked, I began to ask myself (for I was calmer now) what it was about the old fright that made my gorge rise so. I found it hard, indeed, to explain. It was not, I was sure, that I saw treachery or villainy of any kind in him. No, it was nothing like that! It was more like the feeling a man has when he is awakened in the jungle by having a slimy lizard crawl across his face and he stamps on the reptile to relieve his disgust. "Certainly you were never stirred up so before by mere bad looks," I muttered to myself. My teeth were chattering with the shudder that was still on me.

That evening, as I sat in my study, my eye fell on Meredith's letter, which lay on the table. Its connection with the day's incident made me pick it up and read it over. When I came to the place where he emphasized the ugliness of his Nathan, I smiled and thought I saw rather far into his design. Meredith's joke was to send me a black so ugly that I should be filled with the "creeps" at the sight of him, and then be forced to send him back after a siege of bad dreams. "And to think that he's half succeeded already, — but I'll play a little counter game," I said.

Then I took up my pen and wrote a brief letter to Meredith, announcing the arrival of his gift, and remarking that he need not have spoken in so depreciatory a way about the old fellow's looks, as I had often seen worse. I declared I was glad to have him, and would find some use for him. So this was the way in which Nathan began life on my South African farm. It was a tame beginning, but wait until you hear the end.

The next morning, as I sat at my late breakfast, I was rather

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surprised to hear Sam, who always stood behind my chair, mutter something about Nathan. I turned and asked him what he had to say about him.

"Oh, nuthin', sir," he answered, "only you thought that Nathan he fit for no work. He doin' first-class work. Uncle Abe (that was my overseer) set him goin' with the hoe early this morning. That Nathan he got some go in him yit."

This roused me a little, because I suspected that they had acted a little high-handedly with the aged new-comer; and not liking to have him do nothing to earn his bread, had forced some work on him in spite of his weakness. I said no more; but after my breakfast, I sauntered over to the garden, as we called it, where there was about an acre and a half which we kept under cultivation and in which we raised fresh vegetables to supply the house. It was separated from the farm, and I generally detailed a special man, when I could spare one, to take care of it.

It was in one corner of this garden acre that I recognized my Nathan busily engaged in turning up the loose turf with a hoe. I approached him quietly, and whether he saw me or not he gave no sign whatever, but went ahead silently and steadily. It was somewhat fascinating to watch him, — the long, almost rhythmical swing with which he drew the hoe backwards and forwards, his body following the motion. But what made me almost start with surprise was the impression of strength which he conveyed, — the ease with which the instrument passed through the heavy clods, cutting them or throwing them aside — the accompanying swing of his body from the waist, all made me exclaim to myself that there was some suppleness and force left in that old, withered body. "Sam was right," I muttered, "there is some go in him yet. I will let them keep him at work for a time to see how he stands it." I did not remain there long watching. I had an all-morning business in the shape of a ride to a neighboring farm and back again in time for lunch.

When I returned, about noon, and as I rode in past the garden patch on my way to the stable, I saw a familiar figure standing in the furrows using his hoe with long, steady sweeps. I could not believe it at first. I shaded my eyes with my hand and looked sharp at it. Yes, it was certainly Nathan. I whistled, and Sam

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ran out of the stable yard where he had been waiting for me. As he took my bridle I asked him, "Has Nathan been at that all the morning?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered Sam, "I declare I don't believe he has looked up once. I told you, sir, he got plenty of go left in him yet." This moved me considerably. I did not think about the endurance part of it. What struck me was the unselfish fidelity of the old fellow. All the hands used to stop at the end of two or three hours, take a drink, and wear away some time in chatting and lounging before going back to work; but for him to keep on steadily from early morning with not a pause, and on his first day, old and dried as he was!

Well, I just jumped down, let Sam take my horse while I walked straight over to Nathan, and laid my hand on the hoe, expressing as strongly as I could that he was to stop work for the present. He let go the tool like a child, and then stood there waiting for me to order him. He looked much more old and feeble again. His shoulders slouched forward, his back was bent, — of course he was tired, too, after a whole morning's work without a pause. I plucked him by the sleeve, motioning him to come with me. We made our way to the kitchen, where I called the cook and told him to bring some of the meat and vegetable porridge he was making. He brought some in a deep dish, which I set before Nathan. I then ran and got a loaf of wheat bread — the kind that was reserved for my use — and set that before him, too. He was still standing, so I forced him into a seat and pulled off his wide-brimmed straw hat, motioning him towards the eatables. He turned his ugly face up at me for a few moments, and then dropped down to the porridge.

And it was then — then, as the poor old hungry wretch bent over his food — that I felt the wave of that strong revulsion sweep over me again. It was awful. It seemed to reach down into the depths of me. I actually felt like seizing something heavy and coming down hard on the back of his neck — it was well exposed as he leaned over his bowl — and killing him like some unclean dog that you have found thieving in your house. I got out of the room as suddenly and speedily as I could, and almost shouted to myself in vexation, "What, in the name of reason, is the matter

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with you?" But I couldn't begin to answer the question, or even state fairly to myself what I meant by it. I only know that four times I looked convulsively back over my shoulder, and my forehead was damp with sweat, and a peculiar chill ran down my spine. I kept muttering through my clenched teeth, "fool! fool!" but it was no use.

The spell did not last long, however, and it had passed off completely when I had reached my study and was settled down to work at my accounts — a long, tedious job. In fact, I was so disgusted with myself at being worked up — a rare occurrence with me — over nothing, that the whole matter left my mind entirely; and when Uncle Abe, my overseer, entered my room that evening with a troubled face, I never guessed for a moment what he wanted. But he came to the point at once.

"I want to speak to you, sir, about that new man, Nathan, I think his name. I declare, sir, I can't work when he's 'round. And the other men, they think the same way. They most determined, sir, and they all declare, sir, they leave at once if you ask 'em to work with him." For once I was knocked completely out of countenance by a servant. I stammered, "But, — but what's the matter with him, Abe? Do you think he's a bad man?" Here I noticed the slaty paleness of Abe's face and the suppressed quaver in his tone.

"'Tain't that, sir; 'deed I can't say what it is. But I never seed no signs o' bad in him. He's a very good steady worker — wonderful enduring for sich an ole man. But being that as it is, I can't stay near him, so I don't blame the others."

I sat for a few minutes without a word; but then I became suddenly ashamed of my perplexity in Abe's presence, and I dismissed him with a promise to do something the next day. When I was left alone with my own thought, my sense of the folly of it all came strongly back to me. And to think, too, that I shared in the folly of my ignorant black servants. How laughable it was!

I found a way out of the embarrassing part of the affair by determining to confine Nathan in his work to the garden acre, which was enough to keep him busy, and by assigning him to an isolated room in the quarters, where he could sleep. I assured myself that time and familiarity would make him more agreeable to his fel-

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low-workers. "As to myself," I thought, "I'll always be kind to the old unfortunate. It seems bitterly hard to be isolated in that way on account of a face nature has given one."

And I always did treat him kindly. It made me warm towards him still more when I rode by his field every morning and saw him diligently and stoically bending to the swing of his long hoe. I would sometimes shout a greeting as I passed, trusting that he would divine from my tone what my intention was. Sometimes I brought some fruit back in my saddle-bags and I would toss him a ripe mango or two or a banana. But I never attempted any closer intercourse with him. The memory of my two severe experiences kept me at a distance; — and then there was something, *something,* about him which, though I constantly denied it to myself, made me breathe just a trifle freer when I was out of his sight and vicinity.

And so six weeks passed. It is strange when I think of it now — how at the end of those six weeks that old black had so constant a place in my thoughts. One reason for this, probably, was the pronounced aversion of the men for him, which I thought might decrease, but which, on the contrary, only seemed to grow stronger. Another explanation was, undoubtedly, the peculiar character of my position. There I was, a solitary old settler, with little outside my farm to interest or occupy me.

At any rate, the fact was I sat in my study at the end of the six weeks turning over the problem in my mind, and sifting it and sounding it and turning it over again for a solution. What was there about this poor harmless black that inspired the most intense disgust and aversion even in the rough negro laborers, who, at least here in South Africa, are not particularly delicate of feeling? They were certainly not so very far his superiors in the line of looks. But *was* it merely ill-looks that repelled him? Here I was brought sharply to a standstill, and the problem took a personal form. *Was it only his ill looks that repelled me?* I avoided answering my own question, and my eyes wandered hopelessly about the room, finding their way to the table at last where the letter from Meredith was still lying. Mechanically I opened it and read it again — the third time now — and when I came to the postscript at the end I thought I saw a faint hope of solution

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for my difficulty. I sat down and penned a second letter to Meredith, in which I frankly confessed my mystification and begged for any information he had concerning the past history, pedigree or anything connected with Nathan that might possibly lead me to a solution of my problem. I sent the letter off the same day, which proves, if I should doubt it now, my impatience in the matter.

Then I remember I dreamed that night that Nathan was discovered to be the son of an ancient king who had ruled over one of those cities in the heart of Africa, the magnificent remains of which are the wonder of the explorer and the archæologist. He belonged to a distinct, a superior race; no wonder ordinary men were out of sympathy with him, were repelled from him. Only his race must have been one in which the type of beauty was different, radically different, from any yet discovered. This I remarked to myself as I pondered seriously on my dream.

Here I ought to begin a new chapter because I have to talk now in so different a strain. You have heard of nothing so far but of peace, and the sleepiest kind of peace it was, without a ripple to disturb its serenity, nor anything on the horizon in which one could read the indication of even a light blow. But now, of a sudden, there came rumors of war, dark ominous rumors, to disturb the evenness of our placid, lazy life.

The government of South Africa was on the very verge of trouble with the Zulus. An outbreak was looked for at any time.

I wonder whether any one who has not lived in South Africa knows what Zulu means. You will say he is nothing more nor less than a species of negro savage who wears very little clothes, carries a shield and an assegai in battle. But did you know that this negro savage has qualities which place him on a level with the most splendid civilized troops that the world can show? Much has been said about the valor and efficiency of the British infantry man. Without questioning this, let me offer it as my opinion that a single Zulu, with his bare hands, is a match for three of these British infantry men armed with rifle and bayonet,—let him but get within hand-grip of them. For he'll take their bullets into his body and still have strength and vitality enough left to dash their heads together and smash them like egg-shells.

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And as for cool, restrained courage, I have only to call up that memorable picture of the awful fight at Isandhlwana, when up against those English lines advanced the crescent-shaped column of King Cettiwayo's warriors, dense, silent, each man (with the exception of a few inefficiently armed with muskets) bearing no other weapons but the long ox-hide shield on his arm, and in his right hand the fearful short-stabbing assegai. No way of striking at a distance, no way of silencing the enemy's deadly fire until they had him within arm's length of that dreadful spear. History tells, I say, how that brown, silent column advanced that day; how the English, in the fever of desperation, poured their withering volleys, mingled with charges of grape, into that line and tore great gaps in it; and how the warriors closed them with a calmness and steadiness that Europe's best infantry have often failed to show, and pressed forward slowly, silently, without a cheer, without a sound, up to the very muzzles of the guns and then—history tells, too, of the awful end of that gallant British regiment when the Zulu assegai had done its work and had its vengeance. But this is only a little amplification of what the term Zulu means to one who has lived in the South of Africa or has studied a little of its history.

Well, as I was saying, or started to say, it was about this time that rumors began to be current of trouble between the Cape Colony authorities and King Cettiwayo, and no one would have been surprised any day to hear of an open collision, we knew so well the temper of the two parties. For myself, the rumors never bothered me much, first, because I was extremely lazy and my whole nature resisted being worked up over anything; and, secondly, because I did not feel that even in the event of war there was any grave danger to me or my dependents. It is true my place was within easy reach of any wandering band of marauders, but they would have little reason for harming us. There was little, too, here in the way of plunder. And then I had always kept on very good terms with the Undi, when they passed on their way to Cape Town with their guns and ivory and what not. I had even frequently fed them, and housed them over night in the quarters. All this reassured me, but, as I realized afterwards, I left out of my calculation Zulu hate and Zulu vengeance, which,

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when they are once roused, are — well, they're worth an epic to commemorate them. They stop at nothing this side of "profoundest hell."

For the next week rumors and reports were thick and menacing. People found very little else to talk about. We heard of the mustering of angry tribesmen in the North, then of a regiment being sent from Cape Town with orders to deal severely with anything rebellious. And then the scare took hold of the country people and most of them moved into the protection of the city, while I remained stolidly where I was. But I have only a confused recollection of all that happened at that time. It is always hard to remember what happened before a great event, when one has lived through the event itself and is filled with the memory of it.

I never shall forget, however, as long as I live, that night of the 23d of January, which we afterwards learned was the day following the terrible tragedy of Isandhlwana. I was sitting in the veranda reading quietly when I heard the sound of footsteps in quick succession on the garden path. Some one was running hard. I looked up and saw a negro lad making his way towards the house at the very top of his speed. I never saw a face so convulsed with fear. His eyes were literally standing out of their sockets and his mouth was wide open. He reached my side in a moment, but he could not utter a single word for terror. He could only gasp and work his face in agony, and point furiously in the direction from which he had come. I knew he must have meant the approach of Zulus, but my first impulse was to take the news calmly. It was so easy to frighten a boy and there could really be very little to fear.

As I stood there some one stepped up and drew the trembling, paralyzed lad into the house, and at that moment I heard a new sound — a dull, penetrating sound. It was the heavy, rhythmical tramp of feet. And following up the origin of the sound with my eyes I saw, just at the turn of the road where it came into view of the house, the gleam of bright head feathers and then a line of swarthy faces looking over the tops of great oblong yellow shields. They were Undi, and that loping trot would bring them close up in a minute or two. Still I did not feel any fear; there

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was no reason. Even when they entered my gate and marched down the length of my garden in a broad column ten-abreast (there were not more than twenty or twenty-five in their party) and tramped rather ruthlessly on my flower-beds, — even then my only thought was impatience to reprimand these clowns spoiling my flowers with stupid marching tactics. I leaped to my feet and shouted in bad Zulu, but as emphatically as I could, that they should "mind where they marched," and be more careful of my property if they wanted any favor of me. Just then one of my negroes ran in front of the column and shouted something at them, waving his arms as if to wave them back. As he stood there in the path of the advancing line, one of the Zulus, a tremendous fellow, stepped forward, in advance of the rank, and like a flash, he struck my servant a blow with his assegai just between the shoulder and the breast. It was a fearful downward stroke, enough to rip the body open to the waist. Down went the poor man like a log and the column passed over him without a sound. And now along that dark line of faces my eye seemed to see at last the hateful gleam of murder.

I was not dazed; I was not sickened. For the moment a frenzy seized me; all the dormant activity in my nature was roused into maddened life. I rushed to the corner behind the door where I kept my heavy martini rifle loaded and ready for "big game." I caught up the gun and fired into the middle of the brown column, now close upon the house. I could see at once the hole punched in one of the yellow shields (a martini bullet makes nothing of ox-hide) and the shield was lowered and there was the red wound in the throat of the fiend behind the shield, who came on a few paces and then dropped down, first on his knees and then flat forward on his face, while the blood gushed out of his mouth at every gasp. The big fellow who stood next to him — perhaps his brother — reached the top step of the veranda at two bounds. I clubbed my rifle and struck at him savagely — my blood on fire with frenzy — and he, with ease, it seemed to me, swept back the piece in my face with his heavy shield and beat me to the floor like a nine-pin, my head striking hard against the base of the door post.

I was stunned, but not senseless, and I held my breath to feel

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the brute bending over me and tearing out my very heart with a stab of his assegai; when suddenly, out from the open door, a form flashed by me. It was more like the nervous spring of a hound than the bound of a man; and the next instant I saw two withered hands close over the great, corded neck of the dusky giant above me. And he — he was six feet ten if he was an inch — he went back as if a thunder-bolt had struck him full in the face. Crash! he came down on the broad of his back — the whole porch trembled with the shock; and when I saw his face, over the shoulder of his assailant, it was purple, and the tongue was protruding its full length; and I saw the assegai fall from his right hand as the hand opened and the fingers stiffened like chilled wax.

Now I was dazed; I scarcely knew whether I saw or felt. But those black scoundrels behind were on hand at once. They swarmed up the steps and two of them, with one motion, buried their short spears in that form that had its hands fixed in the throat of their companion. I gave a loud groan of agony, as if it was I that had been stabbed, but I caught my breath the next instant. For I saw my Nathan — yes, it was he; I knew him at once by his long arms and the stoop of his body — I saw him whom I thought to be a poor, withered, decrepit old man, turn and seize the rifle that I had dropped and strike with it — oh, heavens! the lightning speed of that blow! — strike and spring full at the crowd of dusky giants with his dreadful club. Then all was whirling and half confusion, but I saw Nathan strike, as it seemed, everywhere at once. I never would have believed that such strength and speed were ever given to a mortal arm. I saw one man throw up his shield and saw it beaten down — the iron arm of a Zulu beaten down like a child's — and his brains dashed out as if his skull were made of paper. Then all was a whirl once more, but I remember counting five distinct shocks of men falling, which made the floor shake under me.

Then I saw what few men in the world have ever seen. I saw a band of Zulus retreating from battle, skulking away with terror written on their faces — many of them spattered with blood. They kept their faces turned towards the house as if they did not dare to turn their backs on that single enemy. While there on the top step of the porch, with the rifle now twisted out of all shape,

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grasped by the barrel in the right hand, stood Nathan. His back was turned to me; he was quivering from head to foot, as if with the violence of the passion that had taken hold of him, — and out of the depths of him somewhere came a sound, a most peculiar sound which I can only liken to a kind of deep, snarling growl.

And it was then at that moment — so help me, heaven — as I lay there stunned and wounded, that my whole being once more was fired with disgust and loathing for that poor black servant. There may have been some fear mingled with it now, as he stood there in his strange might; but it was mostly fierce, loathing hate. I am absolutely certain that if I had had my revolver in my belt, and energy and strength to draw it, I would have shot him in the back where he stood. Witness it! And yet his own blood that he had shed for me was still warm on the ground. I remember how the mad wish almost found expression in words — that the Zulus would turn back and overpower him and tear him to pieces before my eyes.

But I saw there was little chance of this as I looked beyond to the retreating remnant of my enemies. They were still backing away silently, as if they could not even bear the eye of this dreadful being who stood unmoved glaring at them. Farther and farther they went. They had passed out of the garden gate and reached the road beyond. Then I saw no more, for a torpor, whether from exhaustion or mere reaction, settled heavily upon me, and my sense left me.

When I opened my eyes again I became lazily conscious that I had not stirred from the place where I had fallen. I could look down the length of the garden. There was not a sign of a Zulu now, — though lying stark and ghastly about the steps of the veranda were a number of huge forms with marks of fearful wounds upon them. And there, on the top step of the porch, I saw a form that I knew well. It was Nathan's form. He was no longer standing erect, as when I saw him last, facing the cowering band of Zulus; he was lying on one side, not flat, but half supported by his arm. His eyes were only half closed, but as I looked they seemed to be closing still more, as though the same languor that held me were laying hold on him; and beneath him and around him I could see a great pool of dark-colored blood. The realization

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of things seemed to come home to me, and yet I felt strangely indifferent. I realized that Nathan was badly wounded, that he was bleeding to death; and yet I felt no impulse to extend him aid. I am sure, of course, that the half-insensible state in which I lay took away my energy, and that I can lay much of the blame of my listlessness on that. But, but — well, let it pass !

I had not lain in this state for more than a moment, when, borne to my ears from the road, came once more the sound of the tramp of feet; but my ears could make out at once the difference from the Zulu tread. It had more ring and precision, and if one listened carefully he could catch the peculiar jingling made by a body of men marching with accoutrements.

I was about to cry out as loud as my wasted strength would let me, to notify the household that help was near, when my attention was attracted again to Nathan. He had heard the sound, for his eyes were open wide now and a strange gleam was in them which I had never seen before. I realized keenly the terrific effort that he made as he knelt upright; and then stooped and seized one end of the twisted and battered rifle near him and then, with another great effort, staggered to his feet and faced away from me toward the path that led in from the garden gate. As he stood there I noticed that strange quivering seize his entire body, and I heard for a moment, though much fainter now, that same deep, muttering growl. But it was only a moment that he stood there. He began almost at once to sway from side to side and I did not reach a hand to hold him; then his legs seemed to give way under him and he sank, rather than fell, down to the floor of the veranda and lay quite still. And I knew, even from where I was, from the awkward, rigid sprawl in which he lay, that life had gone out of him.

Redcoats now appeared at the garden gate, and the flash of the sunlight reached my eyes from bayonets and gun barrels. But it didn't affect me much. I had not even strength or energy to stand up and welcome them and thank them. I simply lay there half dozing, half awake; and soon I was conscious of the rumble of a multitude of heels on the porch around me. Two figures bent over me and half lifted me, and I could feel one passing his hands over me gently in examination. Then I heard a voice say, " You're

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pretty badly used up, though it might easily be worse, — a nasty gash in the back of the head, and arm broken above the elbow and dislocated at the shoulder. But you've certainly left your mark on these copper devils. How, in the name of sense, you ever managed to mash so many of them single-handed is more than I can possibly guess." Then I heard him mutter something to some one, and a flask was pressed to my lips. I drank some of the liquor and while I was drinking I heard some one shout rather gruffly, "We can bury them all in one pit over by the fence." This roused me more than the brandy, but it seemed that it was not myself but my reason that took voice in me, and cried out, as I pointed to one body that I knew by its position, "He is to be buried alone, and mark the place." Then while the surgeon — he whose voice I had heard — was working over me, as he began at once to do, the thought came to me that perhaps I had not made myself clear, so I spoke out once more. "He saved my life," pointing to the body of my old servant.

It brought a vigorous "hush" from the surgeon; then he added that they would understand, and that my duty now was to keep quiet. He worked over me quickly and deftly, bandaged my head, lifted my shoulder back into place with a few twinges, and set the broken arm in splints. Then he called for two men with a stretcher and ordered me to be taken to my room. "He'll be on his feet in a day or two, if I'm not mistaken," were his last words. They carried me there gently, two of my blacks, including Sam, and put me to bed. With another dose of something warming I was soon fast asleep.

The next morning I felt almost as good as new — for what is a broken arm and a mere flesh-wound in the head to a healthy outdoor man? I was even well enough to make them dress me and prop me up on my lounge. But if my bodily state was righting and mending, my mental condition was a sadly disordered one. I never was besieged — cruelly besieged — by such a confused array of mental questions, each one clamorous and persecuting.

My position was such a difficult one to define to myself. Surely, from the events lately transpired, I should be a grateful man. But did I feel any gratitude? Was I then basely ungrateful? Of what precisely *had* I to accuse myself? What had I

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done? What should I do? What should I feel? Had I been in a reliably sane state of mind for the last six weeks and suffering from no chronic hallucination of any kind? And then, out of all the questions, as if resolved out of them all uniting them like a great climax chorus, came the question: — What, in the name of all mystery, was the solution of that problem which that poor black fright carried about with him and which lay with him in the grave, but still unsolved? Then came the realization — however I might grind my teeth and resist it — that it was a relief, a soothing relief, to think that he was dead — dead and under the ground with four feet of heavy clay soil on top of him.

The last voice, however, in my reflections was that of memory which calmly reminded me that he had saved my life. This was a simple fact. I spoke to Sam on the first opportunity and asked him whether the soldiers had obeyed my directions and marked the place where they had buried Nathan. He said that they had, and had made it very plain with a piece of whitened board. I then told him that I was going to make it much plainer with a slab of white stone — marble, if I could — to be set up at the head of the mound; and I gave him orders at once to see about having the stone procured in town by the next two men who went in with the ox-cart. What else, in reason, could I do?

Two days after that the stone arrived, and I was sufficiently well to walk down and watch them set it up. The little yellow mound was in sight of my bedroom window. As I passed out my door, Sam met me and held out a letter to me. I knew the writing at a glance. It was Sir Arthur Meredith's. And it startled me, too, and made my hand shake a little with eagerness, for I remembered that my last letter had been to ask him for information about Nathan — mysterious Nathan — who was now lying over there under the clay mound.

But what was it that made me, as my eye glanced over the written page, start as if some one had struck me, and cry aloud — so loud that the whole house must have heard me, and stamp furiously on the ground, in spite of the twinge it gave my shoulder, and then walk quickly up and down as an outlet for my excitement; then catch up the letter which I had dropped, and read it again as if I could not make sure that my eyes read aright? Never,

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never shall I forget the shock of that letter — never did a few lines of news so literally nearly take a man off his feet! I could scarcely stand. I did not feel at all sure whether I was standing or lying down, awake or dreaming.

But here is the letter. I give it in full. It is very short and does not need synopsizing :

MY DEAR SHERWOOD:

Your letter reached me on the 15th. It is by the merest chance that it caught me in civilization so that I am able to send you back an answer that will reach you promptly. I could not help smiling when I read the inquiry which makes up the body of your letter. So you really have not found out my secret, but have lived so long deceived? You ask about the connections, etc., of Nathan, who has evidently, in spite of bad looks, won a way into your particular favor. Did you not know that for eight weeks you have been housing and employing not a man but a Simian — nothing more nor less than a specimen of anthropoid (Troglodytus Gorilla) — indeed, one of the most remarkable ones I ever happened upon? It is rather a bold joke for a naturalist to play,— but you have been uncommonly gullible. You will ask me a number of questions about the execution of the whole affair in detail and they will be more easily answered than explained. I can only say that, in addition to his unusually human appearance, for an ape, Nathan added a high degree of tractability, and this, together with a large expenditure of patience and some skill on my part, accounts for it all. I had to use some rather cruel measures, such as the administration of the searing iron, to remove tell-tale hair. Then Nathan had to be fitted with a skin-tight wig, to give the impression of a crop of approved Ethiopian wool. But it was all comparatively easy. The only real labor, which I made a pastime of, was the training, which took me about two years and a half; and you see what fruit it has borne. This is all. Excuse my deep-laid, practical joke, which you now can enjoy with me. You will find some use, I am sure, in that big country of yours, for poor, old, fallen Nathan, even if it be but to keep him for a curiosity. Goodbye to you. We leave here tomorrow for the Upper Nile. I am always, etc.,

ARTHUR MEREDITH.

This was Meredith's letter. After I had read it over the third time I grew more calm and sank into a large arm-chair, and began to think of all manner of things. The thoughts crowded very thick, one after the other, so that I could hardly get a sight of one at a time.

I heard the noise of voices outside, and I remembered that some of my fellows were at work putting up the stone. This brought me to myself and I realized, in a half-determined sort of way, that I should go out and put a stop to their work and make them carry the slab away. I even rose with this thought in my

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mind, and walked to the door. They could easily hear me if I called from the threshold. But as I stood there, with the orders just on my lips, a scene of a few days before came back to me.

I see right before me, on the top step of the porch, an old, withered form lying in a broad pool of blood, and scattered close about are the huge bodies of my would-be murderers. And then, at the sound of feet in the distance, which marked, as he thought, the approach of more of my enemies, I see that form drag itself to its feet, grasp a battered gun-barrel and, in the very act and effort of placing himself between me and the coming danger, fall down dead before my eyes.

I turned and walked back into the house. "They can leave the stone where it is," I muttered, "I will never stir it."

And I never have stirred it. Sometimes (quite often, indeed), I walk down and read the inscription on it. The inscription is this :

Here lies
NATHAN
Who died to save his Master

Surely there is no harm in that, and I have not done wrong in leaving it there.

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The Mystery of Sally.*

BY CHARLES SLOAN REID.

ALLY was a hired girl, the seventeenth since the baby came, about thirteen months before. But we realized that at last we had found a treasure. Sally was inventive. The kaleidoscopic repertoire of amusement which she furnished for our tootsy-wootsy was something to command the admiration of the most callous-brained pessimist of the never-smiles.

This aggregation of inventive genius had been purchased at a weekly instalment of four dollars. Cheerfully, we should have made it five on demand, within a week after her arrival.

But Sally seemed to be devoid of the graft contamination and, indeed, she spent her money like a lord, more than half of her weekly pay going for gimcracks of one kind or another for the amusement of our little one. A car ride to the park each day for the pleasure of our baby formed one of her personal extravagances. Baby soon became so much attached to her that "Mama" was no longer interesting, except at certain periods during the day, and these periods Sally managed so cleverly that no disturbance came to the household serenity through baby's impatient demands.

One thing soon became apparent. Sally had the going habit. She wanted to be away from the house more than half of the time, but, as our little one always came back from these little excursions in excellent spirits, and, barring the harrassing fears that Baby might contract some of the many contagious or infectious diseases of childhood — such as measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough or some other horrifying thing — this habit of Sally's was not at all inconvenient to the household.

Another thing which recommended Sally was the habitual

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neatness of her person, and what became an interesting mystery to us was the matter of how she could spend from two to three dollars per week solely and unselfishly for the amusement of our little one, and dress herself with such taste on the remainder.

Finally, we decided that Sally must be getting credit somewhere, and that we should raise her wages, in order that she might be enabled to meet her obligations.

But about this time I saw Sally emerging from a bank one day. I had been some distance away and unobserved by her.

"Ah," I exclaimed under my breath, "she is borrowing of the bank."

The cashier of this bank was a particular friend of mine, and I determined to learn something of Sally's financial operations. This I had no trouble in doing, and soon learned to my amazement that Sally was not a borrower, but a depositor, to the extent of forty or fifty dollars a week.

My wife and I held a consultation over the matter, for the mystery had deepened. Why one who could indulge the daily extravagances of Sally, and yet deposit forty dollars per week, should hire herself out at a wage of four dollars per week was amazingly mysterious — and yet, Sally was not a thief. Not the smallest item of anything of value had been missed from the house, and no coins or bills ever were kept about the place.

So the mystery of Sally deepened. But, notwithstanding this, Sally was by incalculable odds the best nurse we ever had possessed, or ever could hope to have, and we determined that nothing should dispossess us of her services — no, not if it became necessary to raise her wages to ten dollars per week, which extravagance I could of course ill afford.

So Sally remained, keeping up her usual program, only inventing new means of amusement each day. How long we should have kept her I do not know. But accident plays a large part in the movement of human affairs, and it was an accident which led to the separation of our Sally from us.

An employee from our mills had been seriously crushed in a dray collision over on the East Side, and I had gone over to investigate the responsibility for the accident. This matter being soon concluded, I was returning to the office, when I met

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Jenkins, a friend of mine. Jenkins likes a faker, or a side show performance better than anything; and the East Side was noted for its attraction for fakers and showmen of one kind or another.

"Hello, old man!" called Jenkins from across the street, "wait a moment."

I waited, and Jenkins came over.

"Do you know," he began, "I have found one of the smoothest artists in the show line down here that I've seen in a long while."

"What's his class?" I asked.

"Wild animal tamer, and he has been playing to crowded houses here for the past six weeks. You want to see this, especially the afternoon performance, at which time he gives an extraordinary feature."

He was leading, and we soon came to the entrance way of a large tent which occupied a portion of the area usually taken up by the showmen. Outside were a number of big posters announcing, both by word and illustration, the wonderful feats performed by the man inside, among them being one which was especially horrifying — this being announced in big letters as the special afternoon feature. Jenkins had secured tickets and was hurrying me inside.

Our seats proved to be in a good position, and we had not long to wait for the beginning of the show. The performer soon appeared in the caged arena, and the various features of the program soon were passing before us. Tigers, leopards and lions, one after another, had been introduced, and at last King Leo, a tremendous lion, stood beside his master in the arena.

"Now we get the star performance," whispered Jenkins.

The showman advanced to the front of the cage, where he opened a small wicket window.

"Now," he began, "if some mother in the audience will bring me her baby for a few moments, I will show you that Leo will hold the little one in his great mouth as tenderly as its mother can hold it in her arms. Trust me, some mother — your little one shall receive no harm whatever."

"We have only to wait a moment," declared Jenkins. "There is a young woman in the audience who furnishes the baby each

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afternoon; and Torrelli, the showman, pays her ten dollars on the side after each performance."

"Horrors!" I exclaimed.

And just at this moment the young woman arose from somewhere near the front and advanced, with the baby in her arms. I got one glimpse of them — and the next instant I was on my feet, though almost transfixed in my indignation. The woman was our Sally — *and the baby was our boy.*

I summoned strength enough to draw my revolver, and the man who was not afraid of the whole African jungle cowered before my aim. In the meantime I somehow reached the side of Sally and seized the boy in my arms, allowing Sally to make a precipitate exit.

No doubt she is now working her scheme in some other city where Torrelli is showing. And we — well, we are not requiring the services of a nurse any more. Also, we are seriously thinking of calling our boy Daniel, the little one having been delivered from the lion's mouth, you know.

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An Idyll of Cape de Castro.*

BY LEROY WALLINGFORD.

T was Tong Sue who first discovered gold at Cape De Castro. Tong was prowling up the coast towards Port Darwin, and the strip of white sand that ran like a lace insertion between the emerald waters and the stunted mangroves attracted him. Tong went ashore, washed a few buckets of the sand and then pulled his boat up on the beach. The find was exceptionally rich.

It is a peculiar fact that a discovery of gold, no matter how jealously the discoverer guards the secret, is carried in some unexplainable way to men miles away from the find. This has been proved a thousand times. It would seem that the very intensity with which the man on the spot prays that all others will keep away, has an effect that is diametrically opposite. Men suddenly feel a desire to take the trail that leads to the new Golconda, although that trail may have appeared hopeless only a few days previous, and they explain their arrival at the field by saying that "something" dragged them in that direction.

This mysterious "something" disturbed Tong Sue's solitude five days after he landed at Cape De Castro. A Japanese and a white man arrived from different points of the sunburned plain, and they made straight for the beach and pegged out claims. The Chinaman didn't speak. The old maxim which tells us that silence is golden was translated from the Chinese.

Next day another Jap drifted in from the gray northwest, and the following day brought another. Tong viewed the newcomers with impassive eyes, but he gave no welcomes. He washed industriously from early morn till the tropical twilight was smothered in the heavy night, and the little bag that hung round his neck grew heavier as the days passed.

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Tong's silence welded the friendship that immediately sprang up between the four newcomers. They hated Tong and they liked each other through knowing of the common hate. They compared notes, talked and smoked together in the evenings and cursed the Chinaman every little while. But the hostile looks and the curses did not affect Tong. He dreamed rosy dreams of a maiden who lived far to the north in evil-smelling Hankow, and he twirled his dish merrily.

It was unlucky for the Chinaman that the new arrivals were not as fortunate as himself. His days had been exceptionally profitable, but he soon realized that his claim was the exception. He didn't question his neighbors regarding their luck; he discovered it by that peculiar power of intuition possessed by men who rely upon their eyes to collect information that is never whispered loud enough for their ears to hear.

On the fifth night after the arrival of the first strangers Tong was made still further cognizant of the envy of the four. His sleep was disturbed by a slight sound, and by amazing quickness he managed to twist his body in time to avoid the knife thrust. The incident disturbed him. The few hours that intervened between the happening and daylight he devoted to concentrated thought and the bandaging of an arm that had been slightly wounded when he attempted to hold the would-be assassin. It looked as if the quartet intended to make Cape De Castro too warm for the original pioneer.

Tong had no wish to evacuate hurriedly. He was an aggressive person if judged by Celestial standards, and each day's labor was making the little bag heavier. By daylight he had made up his mind to match his cunning against their strength.

That evening he crept into the bush towards a buffalo wallow a mile inland, and there performed the unpleasant work of bagging a portion of the carcass of a bull buffalo that had become bogged in the sticky mud some three weeks previous. The task was not agreeable, but Tong worked with much determination. The vision of the maiden in Hankow came up before his eyes and made him forget much. He dragged his load by a circuitous track to his boat that he had secreted in the mangroves, and then paddled out into the little bay that sheltered behind the long

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snaky strip of land that pointed up toward Sumatra. He anchored the boat by means of a heavy stone and a few fathoms of rope, and then, by the aid of a long pole, he suspended the bag containing the portion of the dead buffalo from the stern so that it hung some feet above the water. Quite satisfied with his work, he lit his pipe and made a comfortable couch for himself in the bottom of the boat.

The four on shore missed Tong early that evening. One of their number had wasted a considerable amount of time and patience in crawling silently to the spot where the Chinaman usually slept, and was much disgusted at finding that Tong Sue had changed quarters. His companions were also disgusted when he made his report. They made an extensive search of the beach, and towards midnight the moon, that peeped for an instant from behind the black clouds, enabled them to locate the boat in the middle of the little bay.

The four felt aggrieved. They looked upon the Chinaman's action as a personal insult. He had insinuated by his action that their company was not desirable, and they acted quickly to avenge the indignity. They drew lots between themselves, and five minutes afterwards two of the Japs placed their knives between their teeth, stepped out of their scanty clothing and waded into the warm water of the bay. The white man and the other Jap sat themselves down on the sand and waited.

An hour passed and the two who had swam out to expostulate with Tong had not returned. Three hours went by, yet no sounds came from the water. At last the white man, cursing softly, moved up the beach. The Jap followed slowly. It was plain to both that the gods had not been kind to the two swimmers.

Tong Sue did not come ashore next morning. He had examined the beach very early, and seeing only two of his visitors moving about he thought it advisable to stay on the water and rest. The Jap and the white man also rested. They sat on the beach and watched the little boat, punctuating long silences with strange curses. They wondered how Tong had disposed of their two friends. There were no firearms at Cape De Castro, and one has to be quick with a knife to deal with two visitors who make a surprise call. Sometimes the two on the beach

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wondered what was in the bag that Tong Sue had suspended from the stern of his boat.

"He will be sleepy to-night," remarked the white man, as the sun dipped towards the mangrove trees.

The Jap nodded and sharpened his knife on a smooth pebble.

"We'll get him sure," continued the white, and the other bared his yellow teeth in a smile of approval.

"Gettem good," he snapped. "They two dam fools last night. Never mind, mucha more for us." He thought of the Chinaman's gold and stroked his knife cunningly.

They relapsed into silence, sitting side by side till the thick night swept down from Asia and blotted out the little boat.

Tong Sue overslept himself the following morning. The sun was shining upon a deserted beach when he looked shorewards. He searched the shoreline patiently, but no one was visible. Then he glanced cunningly at the suspended bag of offal and the blue water beneath.

"Gettem all four!" he laughed softly. "Plentee good smell, plentee good shark. Dam fool not know!"

He tripped lightly to the stern and started to unfasten the rope that bound the end of the pole to the seat. Tong Sue's thoughts were far away at that moment. The little maiden at Hankow came up before his eyes, and he fingered the rope with clumsy fingers.

But it was a bad moment for day dreams. As Tong stepped across the pole, the untied end was suddenly jerked up by the weight hanging upon the other extremity, and the Celestial was thrown into the water.

A big "gray nurse" shark that had shepherded the buffalo meat for the preceding thirty-six hours, snapped the bag before it touched the surface of the water. Her traveling companion, a medium-sized "bull nose," attended to Tong Sue, and peace settled down upon the white beach of Cape De Castro.

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A Game of Conversation.*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.

HE road ran dusty, yellow and business-like to northwards, holding its way to the distant town of Hadley with as steady a singleness of purpose as if it felt itself responsible for the most important and multitudinous traffic. Neither two-legged nor four-legged creature, nor anything on wheels, disturbed its dust as far as the eye could follow it, but though left to itself it retained its consciousness of rectitude, and swerved not a jot from its uncompromising directness toward Hadley. Southward, indeed, it turned itself sharply around a corner and went off to the east, as if it had pressing affairs to look after in that direction.

Yet there were people — and this very thoroughfare knew it to its scorn and shame — who could see just such a yellow guide to energetic morality stretching ahead, ready and anxious to direct their footsteps, and yet could turn off into fields, or stop and lounge in shades!

Inspired by mute indignation against such worthlessness, the Maul road to Hadley puffed up a sudden small whirlwind of protesting dust in the very face of one of this shameless tribe, without, however, seeming to abash this particular idler. He was not prepossessing in costume. His clothes were the dusty, rusty, yellow brand that is the uniform of the brethren of the road, his hat of unseasonable felt was of a rustier black, and his shoes had long since been divorced from polish. But his care-free contentment had nothing faded about it nor travel-worn. Nothing seemed to be calling him from ahead nor driving him from behind, and he sauntered along as if being alive were the only thing of the least importance, and being idle were no offense to his conscience. Any right-minded and busy passer-by from Hadley would have called

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him a tramp, and very properly refused him a dinner, unless he worked for it first. But his face wore an expression of untroubled serenity, as if he had a happy confidence that there would be things to eat when the time came to think of eating.

So as the sun was hot and the road dusty, and as there was no reason on earth why he shouldn't, this rusty gentleman gave up even his unenergetic strolling, and threw himself down on the grassy roadside, in the skimpy shade of a Lombardy poplar, and lay there, quite comfortable and happy, thinking of nothing at all.

Presently, from round the sharp turn to the south came the sound of a horse's feet, trotting leisurely, and as the roadside loiterer turned his eyes that way, a white horse, big and scrawny, trotted into sight, pulling a two-seated surrey, in which two ladies rode. One of them held the lines and flapped them at intervals over the horse's venerable white back and clucked at him, in the belief that she was making him go, while he jogged on at his own pace and allowed her to think so.

The lounger saw that the ladies were little and middle-aged, probably sisters, and noted the bundles that lay at the feet of the one in the back seat. His gaze lingered on the back of the surrey as it went up the road, and, returning, caught a little bundle in the dust, evidently just dropped. He wondered whether it would be worth while to pick it up and try to return it. Perceiving that they were not at all far away, and jogging easily, he decided that it would.

"Hey! Hey!" he called after them, and ran down the road, the parcel in his hand. "Hello!" he called again, when just behind them, "you've lost something!"

The white horse stopped and two enquiring faces framed in gray curls looked round the side of the surrey.

"Isn't this yours?" enquired the man. "I guess you dropped it out."

"Why, yes," said the lady in the front seat, "so it is! Thank you very much."

"Thank you," said the lady in the back seat. "I don't know what we should have done without it."

"Good afternoon, sir," said both ladies, and the one in front clucked and slapped the lines. The white horse took it that she

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wanted to go again, and regretfully moved one hoof and then the rest out of the repose into which he had slackened.

"Sister Julia," said the lady behind, "It was really very kind of him, and he had to run to catch up. Don't you think we might ask him if he's going our way?"

The one in front reflected a moment. "He looked a good deal like a tramp, Eunice," she said, "but I don't know what harm there'd be, even then."

"Maybe he's just looking for work," was the reply. "I'm sure he hasn't a bad face, and he took off his hat when he handed the parcel to me."

A pull at the lines brought the white horse to another willing stop. Again the two heads looked round the side of the surrey. The man had not gone back to his roadside shade, but, once on his feet, had decided that he might as well stay there, and was sauntering along toward Hadley. Seeing that the ladies had stopped again, and evidently wanted to speak to him, he hurried up.

"Are you going towards Hadley?" asked Miss Julia.

"Yes'm," said the man.

"Wouldn't you like to ride?"

"Why, yes, thank you, ma'am, I would."

Miss Julia made room for him on the front seat beside her, and again the white horse waked and commenced his jog.

For a little way the three rode on in silence, the ladies a trifle embarrassed, and not knowing whether they should converse; he looking about him with the same expression of care-free pleasure in the world that he had worn when tramping, and sitting beside Miss Julia with easy self-possession.

The dust was thick and the white nag's tread was far from dainty. A cloud of dust hung round the vehicle, and now and then the horse blew as if to blow his nostrils free from it, and once he gave a cough, turning his head around toward the vehicle and snapping, as if at a fly. Just then the silence was broken.

"The dust's awful bad to-day!" said a voice.

It was a very queer voice, unnaturally husky, rather high-keyed. It was not Miss Julia's voice, and it wasn't at all like the voice in which the man had spoken. Miss Julia looked quickly around at him. His face was in its usual cheerful repose, and his eyes were

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gazing off across the fields. Miss Julia turned farther, and looked at her sister. Miss Eunice was leaning out, scanning the road behind her.

"I thought," said she, "I heard somebody talking, but there's nobody in sight. Didn't you hear it?"

"Yes," said Miss Julia, "I thought it must have been you!"

"Perhaps there are some people over behind those trees," said Miss Eunice, settling back in her seat, "but it sounded so near."

Miss Julia glanced again at the man, and this time he turned his eyes to meet hers. They were very open, friendly, smiling eyes, and Miss Julia instinctively smiled back at them, and then she ventured a remark.

"You don't live in Hadley, do you?" she said.

"No," said the man; "at least, I never have. Maybe I'll stay awhile — it depends on how I find it."

"You want to find work, perhaps?" put in Miss Eunice.

"Yes," said the man, with a sudden smile of winning joyousness, "work; I'm out of work."

"Oh," said Miss Eunice. "Hadley's a nice place."

"Do you live there?" asked the man.

"No," replied Miss Julia for both, "not right in Hadley — our house is a mile and a half this side of there."

"Of course, Hadley isn't as big as Greensburgh," said Miss Eunice. "That's six miles from our house. Have you walked from Greensburgh? We might have brought you all the way, if we'd known."

"No'm," answered the man, "I didn't come through there."

They waited vainly to hear where he had come from. He resumed his study of the landscape, which was now nothing but level fields on both sides of the road. For several minutes there was nothing to disturb the silence but the regular pound of the horse's hoofs. He tossed his head once or twice, to jerk the lines through Miss Julia's hands to a looseness more to his liking, and as he did so the same strange, husky voice they had heard before spoke again:

"*I* think it's a mercy we didn't meet him sooner. Two's enough of a load to pull all the way from Greensburgh on a day like this, without bringing an extra man along."

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Miss Julia looked at the man and then at her sister, astonishment and some alarm in her face.

"Eunice," she exclaimed, "who was that?"

"Of course, it's all right now, when we're near home and it's getting a little cooler. I'm willing to give a man a lift when I can."

"Eunice," again called Miss Julia, "is there a boy hanging on behind?"

"I can't see any, and I'm sure the voice came from somewhere in front."

"Greensburgh and back in one day's far enough, I say. It makes a fellow's hoofs weigh about a ton apiece time he gets back to his stable. And I think one of my shoes is loose, too. Feels like it."

At the first word of this, spoken still in the same astonishing voice, the sisters looked at each other. At the third, they looked at the man. With lips slightly parted in eager attention, but certainly not moving, with eyes wide and interested, he was gazing fixedly at the steadily jogging head of the old white horse. And thither the sisters' eyes turned too, slowly, incredulously, but irresistibly.

"It's — it's too preposterous!" murmured Miss Julia, after a full half-minute of silence. "Eunice," she said, "there *is* a boy hanging on behind."

"I'll get out and see ma'am," volunteered the man.

"Whoa!" called Miss Julia. Then she repeated, in peculiarly strained tones, "Whoa, Colonel Tobias!"

Colonel Tobias stopped obediently and settled at once into his favorite ungainly posture on three legs, resting one of the hind ones, while Fate and Miss Julia vouchsafed opportunity. The tramp jumped out, looked behind the surrey and all around it, and across the level fields.

"There isn't anybody that I can see anywhere," he reported.

The rest of the way — perhaps a mile — to the place where Colonel Tobias turned in familiarly at the driveway and stopped at the front porch of "the Gligg girls'" house, Miss Julia Gligg talked rapidly, unceasingly, and somewhat nervously, to the young man beside her, and Miss Eunice said nothing, but thought.

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Miss Julia found that the man's name was Joseph Andrews, and he found that she and her sister lived alone and were very comfortably fixed. He also found that at present there was nobody to take care of Colonel Tobias, except a neighbor's boy, who did it very badly, and the ladies had to do the harnessing themselves. Thereupon Miss Julia discovered, for the man allowed it to escape him casually, that he was a master hand with horses. Accordingly it happened, by the time they reached the house, that it was agreed that he might as well stay that night — and maybe a few days — till he could find work in Hadley, and sleep in their barn, and take care of Colonel Tobias, in return for his board and lodging. All this made brisk conversation, clear to the gate, but, here and there in its brief intervals, little remarks in that incomprehensible husky voice came floating back to Miss Julia and Miss Eunice, always singularly apropos and increasingly equine. The two ladies paid no further attention, in words, and the young man made no comment. Miss Julia only talked the faster and Miss Eunice grew a little more abstracted. At last they gave the reins over into the hands of Joseph Andrews and alighted in a state of absolute bewilderment.

"Sister Julia," began Miss Eunice, late that evening, for the first time approaching the subject, "you don't think it's possible, do you, that it — that it was — that it *could* have been Colonel Tobias?"

"I haven't the least idea *what* to think!" returned Miss Julia. And the two ladies retired in equal and helpless perplexity.

Meanwhile Joseph Andrews, out in the barn with Colonel Tobias, spent the evening in radiant satisfaction, partly because of his supper, and partly because of his lodging, and partly because of the easy place he had fallen into, with a prospect of nothing in particular to do and plenty to eat, indefinitely, but most of all on account of falling in with a talking horse. And even in the night he wakened once or twice and chuckled at the accomplishment of his new acquaintance, and for a few moments before he went to sleep again, looked with immovable face at distant corners of the barn, from which the equine voice proceeded in turn.

The morning was still very fresh and young and Joseph had scarcely rubbed the sleep out of his eyes when Miss Julia appeared

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in the doorway and came out to the barn to talk with her lodger. She talked of the weather, and of Hadley, and of Joseph himself, and finally, leading carefully up to it, to make it very plain that it was not at all what she had come for, of Colonel Tobias.

"Joseph," said she, "have you noticed anything — peculiar — about Colonel Tobias this morning?"

"No'm, I don't know as I have. Not anything different from last night, anyway!"

"In the night, do you mean?"

"Yes'm. He seemed to be talking a good deal in his sleep, same as he talked in the afternoon, you know. Has he always done it, ma'am? How did you get him taught — he seems to speak so natural and easy!"

"Why, Joseph!" said Miss Julia, "do you really think it was Colonel Tobias talking yesterday? Horses can't talk — it's ridiculous!"

The face that Miss Julia turned upon her lodger was full of appealing astonishment, and his expression was a perfect reflection of her own as he stammered:

"Why! Did you never hear him do it before?"

"*Do* you think he did it?" implored Miss Julia.

Joseph took off his hat, twisted it in his hands, and gazed into it as if he might read the solution there. His guileless features put on a look of perplexed pondering.

"I — I never would have believed it, if I hadn't heard it with my own ears and seen it with my own eyes," he said at length. "My own brother might have told me, and I wouldn't have believed it. If it had been only the afternoon, I *might* have thought there was some mistake about it, though there wasn't another person but just us three in sight — and him. But all those things he said last night, in the same voice — you couldn't mistake that voice! And then this morning again, almost the first thing when I waked up, I heard a sort of muttering, something about 'I wish they'd hurry up with that mash.' Why, ma'am, if *he* didn't do it, *I* must have! I'm certain I heard it, and I'm sure there hasn't been any one else around."

Miss Julia's eyes went to the open barn door, the stall, and the white back of Colonel Tobias. His ragged white tail swished off

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a fly. Then he turned his long head and gazed inquiringly at the two in the doorway.

"Do you suppose he heard us?" asked Miss Julia, in an awed, involuntarily subdued voice. Then she blushed and gave a nervous laugh. "It's ridiculous," she exclaimed, backing away from the stable door.

Ten minutes later she went back to her sister.

"Well," she said, "he's perfectly sure it *was* Colonel Tobias. He heard him again in the night, and this morning early. His uncle knew a man that heard one once. He thinks it isn't any stranger than that parrots should, and we all know they do. And then horses are so intelligent; they have a great deal more sense than parrots!"

"But I never would have thought it of Colonel Tobias," exclaimed Miss Eunice.

"Neither would I," her sister admitted.

"Well, do you now?" asked Miss Eunice.

Skepticism was struggling with demonstration in Miss Julia's mind, and her answer did not come directly. She gazed absently out of the window, in Miss Eunice's own fashion, thinking how to reply. Joseph came out of the barn, leading the white horse. Miss Julia had directed that he should be brought up to nibble a while at the grass in the yard. Just a little past the window he stopped.

"I guess this is as good a place as any!"

Miss Julia started and Miss Eunice jumped up from her chair and ran to look out too. It was the voice of yesterday — there was no mistaking it — and there was Colonel Tobias, beginning to eat eagerly, and there stood Joseph Andrews beside him, holding the halter and smiling up at the two ladies. When he turned his head away Miss Julia exclaimed, forgetting to lower her voice, as she had meant:

"I tell you what we'll do! We'll drive over to Hadley this very afternoon, and get Cousin Cephas Qualey, and take him out for a ride, and see what he thinks of it."

The morning wore away, but not uneventfully. At intervals in the housework of the two ladies, when one or the other of them stepped out on the porch or was seen at the window, bits of talk

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came to their ears. The white horse seemed to be talking at large — to nobody in particular. He never looked at them when he spoke. With the same elderly decorum that always marked his manner he went placidly about his grazing, lifting his head now and then, and moving on to a fresh spot. But at any moment he might be heard soliloquizing — in human language and a quavering voice — in a manner that no horse was ever known to display before. By noon his owners had had a revelation of his individuality — something they had never suspected him of possessing. They heard opinions of the weather, the barn, the neighborhood; views on driving and on hay; candid expressions concerning themselves and their ways, and some highly favorable comments on Mr. Joseph Andrews, till their minds were in a state of extraordinary turmoil.

Meanwhile, Joseph Andrews lay on the grass in the shade under the window and watched Colonel Tobias, and found his occupation extremely congenial. In the course of the forenoon Miss Eunice came out and learned more of his experiences during the night and of the man his uncle once knew, concerning whom he related a great many interesting particulars that he had neglected to mention to her sister.

He suggested, too, that such a phenomenon as the Colonel ought to be exhibited.

"Why, there's money in it," he said. "Any circus man would be glad to get him. You might begin with a private exhibition right here, and invite a few of the neighbors, just to start it. It would be a tremendous success. Just look at him now!"

Invited by the smooth green of the grass, Colonel Tobias had crooked his stiff knees and let himself down to roll. His venerable hoofs were just being lowered from their exuberant flourish in the air when Miss Eunice looked, and as he scrambled up again she heard the familiar husky voice declare:

"It's a great thing, this speaking your mind once in a while! It's a *great* thing, sure. I don't know why I've kept still so long. I'd just like to have old Cephas Qualey hear me once. He! He!"

Miss Eunice, upon hearing this frank avowal, was confirmed in her determination to keep from Joseph Andrews — and Colonel Tobias — their plan for the afternoon, and also decided to say

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nothing to Julia about Joseph's suggestion until after they had seen Mr. Qualey, in whom both had great confidence.

Just before noon, a neighboring farmer, on his way from the village, threw a small packet of mail into the dooryard, and when, after dinner, Joseph had harnessed the Colonel into the surrey, Miss Eunice gave him the county paper for entertainment during their absence. As he handed Miss Julia the reins, Colonel Tobias threw up his head, without waiting for the customary cluck, and his husky equine voice was heard to exclaim:

"Now, old girls, we'll see what Cousin Cephe thinks of it!"

But that was the very last scrap of conversation in which the Colonel ever was known to indulge. On their return from their hot and unsatisfactory excursion, the Gligg girls waited vainly for Joseph Andrews to come and hold the horse, and then they searched vainly for him in the stable. But on the porch, pinned to the *Greensburgh Chronicle,* they found this pencil note, written very correctly, in a neat hand:

DEAR LADIES:

The newspaper which you kindly lent me for an afternoon's amusement seems to point the way to another chapter in my somewhat erratic career. From it I learn that Ridgely Brothers' Triple Universal Show, with which I was connected last season, as Prof. Andrée the Swedish Ventriloquial Wonder, will arrive in Greensburgh late this afternoon. I can walk there easily before supper time, without troubling Colonel Tobias for another "lift," as I feel that his complaint was just. The Colonel has inspired me with a great idea. I am convinced that the dapple-gray on which Mlle. Desirée does the blazing hoop act can be induced to prattle as fluently as your own fiery steed, and if you will inquire at the ticket van for two "complimentaries" left by Prof. Andrée for the Misses Gligg, when the circus shows at Hadley, day after to-morrow, I shall be much pleased to have you judge for yourselves.

Meanwhile, with sincere thanks for your kind confidence in such a tough-looking stranger, I am very truly yours,

JOSEPH ANDREWS.

But the disappointed proprietors of an ordinary dumb animal felt too much chagrin to avail themselves of such an opportunity, and so they never again heard a talking horse.

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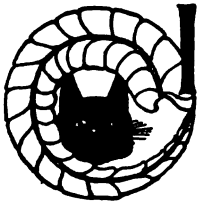
Cupid Valiant.*

BY SWIFT ADAMS.



IF you happen to be traveling in certain parts of Montana, you will probably put up at one of those little edifices that are two-thirds saloon and the rest hotel. There are usually two in town, and if you stop at one you wish you had stopped at the other. If you have a genial disposition, after supper you will sit around and smoke in the large room that serves as lobby, bar-room and office, besides containing the appurtenances for billiards, cards and such other games as are popular on that section of the map.

When the room becomes hot and smoke-filled beyond toleration you and others go outside and lounge on the stoop, or on the exceedingly hard ground, and very likely you swap stories.

Seven or eight of us had reached that point in trying to forget an everlastingly hot night. Cowhands, farmers, and some hard to classify, straggled out of the bar-room of the maliciously named Hotel Comfort, and listened to the highly flavored tales, and contributed their own of the same quality.

I, being a stranger, was a little timid about breaking into the talk, but during a lull I hazarded a remark:

"I don't want to be curious about things I shouldn't," I said, "but I saw a dignified old man inside playing solitaire, and he had a bullet hole in his left ear. I have been wondering ever since how he got it."

There was a general laugh, and a drawling, high-pitched voice spoke:

"You're a stranger here, ain't you?"

"My first trip in this piece of country," I replied.

"That old man is Jedge Buck," said the voice. "Most of us know how he got that there dent in his ear. But as there ain't

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been a new story sprung here in over two years, I guess the boys can stand for me telling you about it."

Nobody objected, probably because of lack of energy, and the drawler lighted another cigarette. The flare of the match showed a tanned, lined face and keen eyes.

"A dare-devil gang used to stamp hereabouts," the speaker continued. "They were mostly fresh young ropers, one or two horse traders, a few no-account chaps — and me. We used to hunt trouble for the love of it. When we couldn't find any we manufactured it. There wasn't law or man we were afraid of.

"We had a leader called Red Mike. He had forgotten the word fear was in the language. He was strong, too, and lightning with his shooter. But all of us were those things about as much as Red Mike. It was his master mind that let him hold his job.

"When the rest of us were shooting up a saloon, or such trifle, and wishing for a bit of real hell, Red would work up doings juicy with excitement. He could smell opportunities, and you bet he always steered us into the hottest action.

"We generally used to cluster evenings in Yellow Grass Gulch, and ask Red if anything was doing likely to tear a hole in the calm. Sometimes Red had only middling good plans, such as turning loose the prisoners in the county jail, just for the fun of rounding 'em up.

"But one night he sprang a scheme that had even us swearing with admiration.

"'Brace up, boys' he said, 'there's going to be doings to-night. Old Jedge Buck sold 5,000 head of cattle to-day. He's got the cash locked up in his store at Brown's Corners. The old tightfist is sitting over the wad with a shotgun.

"'We're going to make him break a record and loosen up. We'll kindly provide him with a generosity. Our part is to grab the coin and then have a feast at Bud Hinkey's boozery!'

"That was a little stiff, even for us. We had shied away from the swiping game. But do you suppose we hesitated? We whooped and shouted that Red was a great man and ought to be President of the United States.

"It was moonlight, and as nice and cool as you could ask for, with not a mite of wind — a very devil of a night for making a

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man feel he could wallop the universe with his hands tied. The horses felt it, too, and as we galloped along, singing and laughing, we sudden-like heard a noise.

"'Hands up!'

"Them words snapped out in a voice that brought us sitting up stiff. Every man of us raised his fists. A score of guns went up too and spit toward the sound.

"Then, by gum, into the moonlight, with a gun in each hand, rode Slim Johnson. Slim wasn't so much — but we all knew he could shoot the eyebrows off you with either hand, and didn't want no better fun than to try it.

"'Slim, you son of a gun,' Red Mike yelled, 'what do you think you're doing, holding us up this way? Holding *us* up! Of all the confounded nerve—'

"'You-all will turn around and go back the way you came,' Slim said, keeping his guns leveled.

"'Well, now, I guess not, Slim,' Red answered. 'We wouldn't let many people talk to us like that. Before anything worse happens, tell us what your game is.'

"'You'll never get us alive,' Slim said.

"'What?' Red asked.

"'I swear I'll drop the first man that touches her,' Slim answered, looking desperate.

"'What are you talking about, you cussed idiot,' Red Mike yelled.

"'Ain't you sent by Jedge Buck to bring back his daughter?' Slim asked — confused like.

"The boys bellowed with laughter and Slim went red as a lobster.

"'Lord, Slim!' Mike exclaimed, 'You don't tell me you've gone and stole Maria Buck?'

"'We're running away and we're going to be married in Spikeville to-morrow. You ain't said you're not after us, though,' Slim added, suspiciously.

"'Well, that *wasn't* exactly what we're figuring to do,' said Mike, when he could talk for laughing. 'You-all had better ride along with us.'

"Slim got the girl from where she was hid, and we moseyed

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along the trail, Red Mike telling Johnson what we were up to. We wanted Slim to join us, but he said he couldn't do that. Pretty soon Slim and the girl fell a little behind and we could hear her telling him he ought to help her old man. But Slim knew us better than to try.

"In about half an hour we got to Brown's Corners. We hiked over to the store, and, by gum, there was the Jedge setting inside, with a big duck gun acrost his knees. When he saw us he knew we weren't there for no good. He had sand, though, and came out and said he'd plug the first man of us who came within sniffing distance of the mazuma.

"Whity Hanks (he could shoot the date off a dime) let go a forty-eight calibre pill that sent the gun flying out of the old man's hands. We yelled and started to rush inside, when Slim ran up the steps and turned around on us.

"I felt real pained, for I knew if Slim was going to try to stop us, he was likely to get awful unpopular.

"'Boys,' Slim said, 'you-all have got all night for this job. Lots of time. Now, Maria and I want to get married, and I want you to help me make the Jedge hitch us up.'

"The bunch saw the beauty of the situation and just howled with delight. When the Jedge saw his daughter he was plumb crazy. He said things, but we couldn't hear them for the whooping of the boys. He stood up there in the moonlight, red and excited and swearing, and we were about drunk with joy.

"Slim and Maria got off their horses. Slim waved his arms until he could make himself heard. Then he grabbed the girl and squared off to the Jedge. He explained that he and Maria was going to splice and it might as well be done right there.

"'I'll see you both shot first, you red-headed horse thief,' the Jedge shouted, his face all twisted up with mad.

"Now Slim was good-natured enough, but the Jedge was pricking him on a painful incident of his extreme youth. He yanked out a gun.

"'You'll marry us right now, or I'll put a bullet plumb through you,' he shouted.

"'You haven't the grit, you pony grabber!' yelled the Jedge.

"By gum, Slim let fly and bored His Honor in the left ear.

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"'Now will you?' he bellowed, not hearing Maria, who was squalling.

"The Jedge was driveling, but he wasn't so mad he couldn't see Slim was in the deadest kind of earnest.

"'Stand up, confound you!' the Jedge cried, shaking his fists.

"'Slim Johnson, you no-good coyote, do you take that wilful hussy aside you to be your wife?'

"'Yes, you old heathen,' shouted Slim. 'And you-all keep your mouth shut of calling that girl names!'

"'Maria, you good-for-nothing vixen,' said the Jedge, getting madder all the time. 'are you going to take that murdering idiot, Slim Johnson, as your husband?'

"'I be,' Maria said.

"'I pronounce you man and wife — and disown you, drat you.' The Jedge was so full of angry he couldn't even swear. The boys cheered and whooped it up for Slim, but right in the middle of it, Slim shoved Maria inside the store and faced around beside the Jedge, with his guns drawn.

"'Now, boys,' he said, 'git.'

"For a minute we was stunned. Red Mike swelled up indignant, but before he could explode Slim cut in:

"'I'm thankful to you, boys, for how you've helped me. But the Jedge is my old man now, and before you get him you'll have to get me too.'

"I don't know what would have happened. But just for a minute we was undecided like. The Jedge was nobody's fool, and he saw that something had to be done mighty quick.

"'Boys,' he hollered, 'I reckon if you had my cash you would leave it over to Bud Hinkey's. So you-all go over to his place and spree on me for a week.'

"'He's loosened up, boys!' one of us yelled.

"That started 'em off, and the boys shouted and laughed and charged over to Hinkey's."

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From a Papyrus.*

BY DONALD KENNICOTT.

AIL, Horus! Hail, Osiris! Hail, most bountiful Isis! But above these, my gods, must praise be given to the great mad god of the Jews, for I dwell singularly under the shadow of his favor. Therefore triumph swells my voice, and in my heart is joy and great wonder.

At dusk, on a day in the spring of the year of the nine plagues, my boat laden with black, writhing eels, with amethystine jelly-fish, and with striped sea-trout, taken alive cunningly for the refection of the fastidious, I passed up the river by the island owned of Hordedeef, the slave merchant. And there, sitting on the nethermost step of the barge-landing, I saw Anena first.

She leaned back against the green marble balustrade, she dipped her feet in the lapping water, and gazed out into the golden sunset, and as my boat passed by, she sang. The words of her song I could not hear, but none the less her song seemed to me sweet and gay and very sad. And her voice — ah, her voice was like the echo of bells at dusk, like the sobbing throat of the Nile at midnight, like the murmur of doves at noon. That night I did not sleep.

Next day I sold my boat, my nets, my coffer carved of lapis-lazuli, and the belt of jade work given me by my mother. I thought then that I had doubtless gone mad, for only the previous week a young hyena had run across my shadow, and as is well known, madness is often thus caused. Yet it was not so: I was guided of a god. With the moneys thus gained, I went to Hordedeef the slave-merchant. Ho, Hordedeef, Hordedeef, thou wast cunning as a serpent, subtle as a mother-cat,

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swift as the black hawk of Serapis! Yet this god was more cunning, more subtle and yet more swift. Ho! Hordedeef, friend Hordedeef, where is now thy slave Anena? Where is now thy coffer of coined gold? And where, good Hordedeef, where is now that dried-apple face of yours? And that baboon's body. Answer me that if you can, good Hordedeef!

Crossing to his island in a hackney boat, I found Hordedeef. He sat on a palm-stick couch in the shade of a carob tree, eating figs and smacking his lips. I told him that I wished to buy a young woman. He looked at me, grinned and waddled off like an old gray monkey. Presently he came back with an ancient Kabyle woman whose arms were like withered dhoura stalks. I did not look at her but said again patiently that I wished to buy a young woman. He took the creature away and returned with a fat black wench from the Soudan. I scowled and spat upon the ground, and he took her away also, grinning. So it went. He brought many women before me — some of them, too, were young and very beautiful — but I never looked at them, for I did not see the one whom I sought.

"You are hard to please," said Hordedeef.

"Have you no others?" I asked him. And he answered me, "None but a young girl already contracted to Sebkhi, the eldest son of Senesu, the jewel merchant."

"Let me then see her," said I. "Perhaps I will offer you a greater price."

Hordedeef laughed and mocked me. "What," he cackled, "you offer a greater price? Know you not that Sebkhi wallows in gold? And that the girl is the daughter of an Arab king stolen subtly in her childhood? And that even then I paid for her a hundred rings of coined gold? Much also have I spent on her up-bringing and education. In a month, when she shall have turned fifteen, Sebkhi pays me three hundred pieces of coined gold and takes her to his house."

Well might Hordedeef mock me, for the sale of all my goods had brought me scarce a tenth that sum. I got me home again from his island and all day I sat in my house, gnawing my fingers and cursing the gods and weeping tears.

Again that night I did not sleep. Toward morning, being

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as it seemed, altogether mad, I went to the river, and giving thought neither to the crocodiles, the quicksands, nor the broad waters of the Nile, I plunged in boldly. For long I swam. Once, an undercurrent dragged me down, once I felt the thick slimy nose of a crocodile nuzzling my thigh, and once breath failed me — yet none the less I at last gained the island and lay down exhausted in a thicket of flowering acacia.

There I slept the morning through. Waking at noon, I lay for a time languid as a dozing cat. The great white flowers of the acacia shed their peace and perfume over me; the rays of Phra, the sun, gleamed down golden through the pale green fronds, drying my garments and breathing balm upon my harried soul. Rising at length I crawled to the edge of the thicket, peeped out warily and behold! Again the god had guided me.

For there, in a sunlit space among the trees, was Anena herself — Anena and a great strutting peacock. She held out a bit of cake and the fowl craned his neck for it. Then, just as his beak came close, she snatched it away again, mocking him. Whereat the great fowl spread his tail and screamed with rage like a drunken devil. Thrice she thus goaded his hunger and mocked his wrath, laughing and laughing yet again. Then, wearying of the sport, she tossed the cake to him and was about to turn away when I spoke to her. I spoke to her softly. I do not remember what I said or what she answered, or what — yes in truth I do remember, but it is of no moment.

Anena did not go away. She sat on the grass and talked with me. She had never before talked with a man, save only with Hordedeef and his servants and Sebkhi — Sebkhi, whose face was the face of a tunny fish and whose hair was dyed; Sebkhi, to whom she was contracted and whom she loathed as she loathed a toad. Anena sat with her hands clasped about her knees and talked with me. Her hands were little, like the hands of a child. When she spoke to me her voice trembled like the strings of a harp when the harper is sad. When she looked at me, her long eyes closed and opened like the petals of a mimosa when one touches them. The lids of her eyes were gilded with gold; the white linen fillets about her temples were caught with round

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temple-studs wrought curiously of jade and ivory; in her hair was a jewel of green malachite. Anena was beautiful when I first saw her sitting on the barge-landing at dusk. Anena was twice beautiful when I spoke with her under the flowering acacias at noon. Hidden in the leaves above us, a little dove murmured and murmured yet again, but never once stirred from his covert; before us on the river-bank, an ibis ran up and down like a boy on stilts, catching frogs; to and fro about us, a gaudy little humming-bird reeled dizzily from white flower cup to white flower cup like some dainty drunkard of the air, rousing the loud anger of many bees. I forgot Sebkhi; I forgot that I had sold my boat vainly; I forgot Hordedeef and all loathsome things. Yet was I not mad, but guided and guarded of a god.

For lo! Of a sudden I heard loud shoutings, and there, running swiftly toward me came old Hordedeef and a score of his hirelings, armed with spears. By Phra, his godhead, that was not a coming to be tarried. I leaped to my feet, ran to the river-bank, and as I plunged in, a javelin came hurling past my ear. I swam under water, coming up for breath only when my chest seemed like to burst, and then most warily. None the less, they twice sighted me and twice an arrow splashed the water close by. Then the arrows stopped, and looking back, I saw them at the barge-landing loosing a boat. I gave myself up for fish-meat then. And then it was that the god lifted his hand. For when I looked back again, still had they not pushed off, but stood on the step of the barge-landing, pointing at the water, waving their arms, and shouting to one another. I swam on blindly, and more weary than a beaten galley slave, gained the shore. I drew myself up out of the water and lo! My body was red as with blood. Yet upon my body there was no wound. And when I looked at the river, behold that too was everywhere red like blood. I lie not. From the bank as far as one could see, the river ran red — red like blood. Thus had the god lifted his hand; therefore had Hordedeef been afraid to push forth his boat. This thing is a true thing. It lives in the memory of all men. For seven days and seven nights the river ran red — red like blood.

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That night there was murmuring and muttering and the gathering of throngs throughout the city. Everywhere men said vain things, imagining evil. Here a stout rascal stood with clenched fists upraised and cursed the tribes of Ethiopia that had stained the river at its headwaters with slaughter of unclean beasts sacrificed. There in the market place a woman ran to and fro screaming that Osiris had herself been wounded by a god from the moon bent on conquest, and bled in defense of her people. Yonder a doddering gray-beard stood on a housetop and prophesied the end of the world and the death of all the gods. Only in the quarter of the Jews was there quiet — the quiet of those that have knowledge. There it was said that Moses, their leader, had with the aid of a strange, high and nameless god, done this thing in order to strike terror to the hard heart of Pharaoh and thus secure the release of the Jews from bondage. And indeed, it may be that they had truth, for in the temple all the high priests were gathered before Pharaoh in contention with this Moses, and there were prayers, sacrifices and subtle incantations without pause or number. Yet it is true that one cannot be certain, for everywhere men said vain things, imagining evil.

There followed that great season of wrath, when all the world was darkened with the mad strife of the gods. The tale of that time is known to all men. How for seven days and seven nights the river ran red as with blood. How all Egypt was smitten, now by celestial sendings of frogs, of lice and of pestilent flies; now by a murrain upon the beasts; anon by a plague of boils and blains upon mankind. How hurricanes of hail beat down the flax and barley; how the east wind bore upon us swarming myriads of locusts that blackened the sky and left not one blade of herbage in all great Egypt. How the green kingdom of Pharaoh became desolate as the salt lands of Sekhat Hemat, dry as the dusty solitudes of the Sahara, black as the poisoned wastes beyond the Mountains of the Moon. This is known of all men and I dwell not on it, for the evil of that season has seared blind the eyes of retrospection.

During all this accursed time moreover, I never saw Anena, for the guard of Hordedeef now patrolled the shores of his island

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incessantly. All day I would sit on the river-bank, gazing out with strained and ardent eyes across the water. All night I would lie sleepless on my bed, gnawing my fingers, cursing curses, and weeping bitter tears. Yet at last, when it seemed certain that the end of the world was upon us, though I lost all hope, I lost all fear also — save for Anena. For, looking across the water after the plagues of hail and of locusts, I could see that the island of Hordedeef, the slave-merchant, was now no longer green but black — black like a great mummy that is wrapped in wrappings of pitch. Therefore, late one night, fearing for the safety of Anena and thinking also that it were as well to die fighting the hirelings of Hordedeef as to fall like a butchered ram under the immanent stroke of the gods, I tied a sharp knife to my neck, and for the third time slipped into the waters of the Nile.

Again I gained the island just before dawn and landed cautiously behind the back of the watchman on the shore. Yet though I won a landing, it seemed certain that the sowing of my madness would at last yield its harvest of death, for the leafless herbage now afforded me no shelter. Seeking concealment, I trod warily about, but the dawn pursued me relentlessly, and at last when groping along a wall I had stumbled into an open place before the gate of Hordedeef's house, the sun rose up over the river and denounced me to three black Ethiopians that lay in the doorway like hounds on guard. They leaped to their feet with a shout; hoping only to use my knife once or twice before I died, I set my back to the wall and waited. They gathered close together, made ready their weapons and were about to rush upon me when lo! A black veil of darkness fell between us so that one could not so much as see his hand before his face. Thus for a second time had the god lifted his hand and guarded me. I lie not. The thing is known of all men. For three days a starless darkness lay over all Egypt, and everywhere men cried out that Phra was dead, was dead.

My enemies shouted aloud in wonder, then hushed their cries for fear. I myself, who had lost both hope and fear alike, sank to my knees from fright and felt my heart knocking against my ribs like the hammer of a gold-beater. For an instant I

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crouched there, and such a stillness lay over all the world that I could hear the breathing of my enemies — and the chattering of their craven teeth. Then treading lightly, with hands outstretched before my face, I moved away softly through the gloom.

How long I wandered, whether moments or hours or days, I may not know. Neither in fear nor in hope, but with a high heart and an uplifted head, I set out to seek whatever thing it was that the gods had in store for me. Up and down I strode, heedless where I went, seeking only Anena. Now silent, now calling on the name of Anena, now even chanting aloud the Hymn of Propitiation, I passed onward — through glades unswarded, through gardens barren of verdure, through groves of trees whose black, gnarled and hateful branches stretched up to the starless sky as the arms of men tortured are uplifted in appeal to Serapis. Through doorways and into houses, under archways, through corridors and into inmost seclusions, I moved unseen, like a hungry hound. Sometimes I came upon huddled groups of slaves and guards whom fear had intermingled; sometimes I stumbled over dim figures crouching solitary in corners. None spoke to me; the silence was as the silence of the dark catacombs in some vast necropolis. None stirred abroad but I — I and certain great stupid bats whose warm, hairy wings now and then brushed against me.

Yet at last I found Anena. She sat on the topmost step of a stairway, crying to herself like a child that has lost its way at night. When she heard my voice calling, she answered; and when I came to her, she clung to me, sobbing softly. When I saw Anena first, sitting on the barge-landing at dusk, I loved her. I loved her yet more when I talked with her under the sweetly flowering acacias at noon. But when she clung to me there in the darkness, in the thick and black night, then was my heart wholly in her hands.

For long we did not speak. Then for a little time we talked together in whispers. And then it was that hope was born anew in my breast. I told my plan to Anena. She gave assent and bade me wait there without moving while she made herself ready. She disappeared, groping her way along the wall of the

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staircase in the darkness. Half mad with anxiety, I waited her return. After long she came again, laden with baskets of raiment and a small but weighty coffer. When I asked her what this latter contained, she laughed consumedly.

The island was so well known to Anena that she feared not to traverse it even in the darkness. I took upon me her burdens, and, leading me by the hand, she groped her way down the staircase, through corridor and gate and narrow path, even to the barge-landing. None hindered us or raised his voice, for all upon the island, both slave and slave-master and slave-guard, were smitten blind and helpless with fear. Only Anena and I, whom the god guided and guarded, were without fear.

We found a boat, embarked, and though the darkness veiled east and west alike, we pushed off boldly. The journey was long, yet we did not falter, and at last gained the shore and the city. We passed through the black and empty streets and never once so much as stumbled. We came to my house and entered in. Thus did I bring home Anena — in the twilight, in the darkness, in the thick and dark night. Thus twice had the god guided and guarded me. The third and greatest marvel was yet to come.

On the fourth day, as is known, the darkness lifted and men thronged the streets, babbling of the miracle. Again it was said that Moses, the high priest of the Jews, had with the aid of Jehovah, their god, caused this darkness in order to strike terror to the hard heart of Pharaoh and cause him to release the Jews from bondage. Many other vain things were said also, but I gave little heed, for Anena was in my house — Anena and a coffer of coined gold that the little dove had stolen from old Hordedeef and brought with her. These were my concern and I kept my door well barred against the certain coming of Hordedeef and Sebkhi.

And at dusk some days after the lifting of the darkness, they came — Hordedeef and Sebkhi and a friend of Sebkhi, the eldest son of a captain of the guard. All that day, there had been rites, sacrifices and all manner of ceremonial among the Jews. My house stands over against the Jewish quarter and at

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dusk that day I stood in the doorway watching them, Anena peeping over my shoulder. Each Jew stood in the door of his house with a bunch of hyssop and a basin filled with blood of sacrifice. In unison and with muttered prayers, each Jew dipped the bunch of hyssop in the basin and therewith bedaubed both the doorposts and lintel of his dwelling with blood. Standing in my own doorway to watch this strange rite, I heard all at once a rush of feet and there, running at me with drawn weapons, came Hordedeef, Sebkhi, and Sebkhi's friend.

Perhaps made more eager because of his lost coffer of gold, old Hordedeef came somewhat in advance, a long knife in his hand, the foam of rage dripping from his lips. My doorway is narrow; my arm is strong. I caught him by wrist and hair, bent back his head, and wrenching away the knife, drove it deep into his throat. Then stepping back, I hurled the limp body like a sack of meal into the face of Sebkhi and sent him reeling back into the arms of his friend. Ho, Hordedeef, friend Hordedeef, how thy red blood spouted up — delicately, like a little courtyard fountain! As I slipped back inside and barred the door, I laughed aloud to see that doorpost and lintel alike were painted gaudily red, like those of the Jews. And as Sebkhi and his friend hurled themselves against the barred door, I mocked them with taunts, with gibes and with incontinent laughter.

Yet when they ceased their attack upon the door, I abated my merriment also, save for such feigned cheerfulness of countenance as was needful to reassure Anena, for I knew Sebkhi to be cunning and relentless. I knew that he would now lie in wait for me until I should leave my house; and when I heard soft footsteps on the roof, I knew that his friend was waiting there to hurl a knife at me whenever I should venture into the courtyard to draw water. Yet twice had the god guarded me — me, all undeserving. And therefore, though Fear sat beside me, he crept not into my heart.

Night fell and deep darkness. From the quarter of the Jews there came an uproar of chanted hymns and of multitudes murmuring prayers. Awaiting the attack of Sebkhi, I sat with Anena, sleepless. Midnight came and lo! Over the city there reverberated a dreadful sound, like the clangor of iron pinions,

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like the sound of a great sword brandished. To and fro the sound swept over the city now near, now far, now loud, now soft, but always strange, deadly and terrible. Once this sound came near, paused an instant overhead, then passed on swiftly. And in its wake there rose up cries from men and from women — cries of terror, of agony, and of grief.

At length the sound was hushed. Morning came. I ventured to peep out through a crack in the shutter, and behold! There in the street, not far from the carcass of old Hordedeef, lay the body of my enemy Sebkhi, the eldest son of Senesu, the jewel merchant — stricken dead, it seemed, by that winged demon of the night. And when I ventured warily up on the house-top, there, too, lay the body of his friend, slain likewise by that silent hound of Serapis. And when I paused there and listened, lo! From one house I heard a young wife wail that her baby was dead, was dead. And from another, an old man likewise cried out that his son was dead, was dead. And from all over the city, save from the quarter of the Jews, voices joined in a universal lamentation of their dead. I lie not. This thing is known of all men. How, after eight bitter plagues had failed to move the hard heart of Pharaoh to release the Jews from bondage, a demon sent by their god slew the first-born of every house in Egypt, save only in the houses of the Jews — and in mine. Thus for the third time their god guarded me.

Hail, Horus! Hail, Osiris! Hail, most bountiful Isis! Hail, Typhon and Nephthys! Hail, all gods to me unknown! But above these, my gods, shall praise be given to Jehovah of the Jews, for most curiously have I been cloaked in the mantle of his favor!

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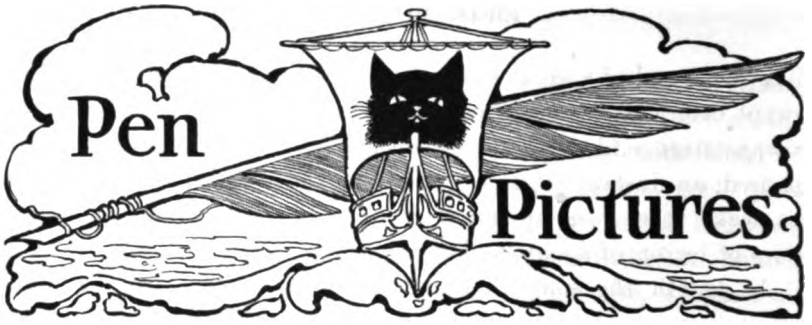

The Weirdest Land on Earth.*

No. II.

The Living Foes of the Woolgrower.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

Of the Australian Woolgrowers' many living foes the white-eyed crow, the rabbit, and the dingo overshadow all others. These form a trinity of terrors that the sheep-breeder never forgets and never forgives. He wars on them relentlessly but hopelessly. Poison, gun, and trap are used unsparingly, but so great are the odds that the results are discouraging. This ever multiplying trinity, in conjunction with drought, will in a single year pull the wool king from affluence to the bankruptcy court and damn his soul by provoking unavailing blasphemy by their incessant attacks. In one season alone nearly twenty million sheep succumbed to the drought and their carcasses supplied the banquets of the crow.

And the Australian crow is a bird accursed. He is the arch criminal of the feathered tribe — the black, glossy fiend of a drought-stricken land. He stands apart from his brethren in all other parts of the world. He is the demon of death, and the bushman's hatred of him is immeasurable. It surpasses all hates. The spectacle of flocks of blinded lambs that are still alive, but whose eyes and tongues have provided dainty titbits for the ghoul's feast, does not develop love. The pitiful sight of weak, starving ewes circling round and round their helpless offspring in a vain attempt to protect them from the bird's fiendish at-

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tacks, stirs a hate that never dies. The crow is regarded as a devil in feathers.

And when King Drought rides over the land this bird of ill omen waxes fat and insolent. He dines gloriously. He gorges himself until he cannot fly, and the infuriated stockmen club him as he waddles helplessly around the live lambs whose tongues and eyes have provided the gorge. From morning till night the black legions offer up a thanksgiving chant over the tens of thousands of animals that perish for want of water. The blue, sticky mud around the fast-drying waterholes of the interior grips the weak sheep that has dragged itself many weary miles and struggles towards the stagnant, slime-covered centre of the bog, where the crow holds royal banquets. They cannot escape him then. The unfortunate animals have not strength to extricate themselves, once they are bogged. Each day they have dragged themselves over an ever-increasing distance to the waterholes. The land for miles around the tanks becomes as bare as a billiard table, even the roots of the grass have been devoured, and each day brings the famishing flocks nearer to the crow's banqueting board.

The army of "jackeroos" as the men employed for the crows' destruction are called, armed with guns, are unable to protect the starving flocks from the attacks. They can but skin the eyeless carcasses that stand rigid in the mud that hardens under the tropical sun like cement around the animals' legs. The wool king gets the pelt — the crow gets the carcass. It is no wonder that the bushman despises the crow. It is no wonder that in his frenzy he has been known to act on the Biblical code of an Eye for an Eye, and deliberately pierce the eyes of captured crows. He sees in him the incarnation of everything that is unclean and devilish.

And the crow has tastes above sheep. In the wastes of the Never Never country; on the gray, waterless stretches that run towards the Darling; on the lonely tracks of the Overland, he will follow the staggering, thirst-maddened bushman and patiently await the inevitable end. The crow knows the distance to the nearest water. He knows whether the unfortunate one can reach it. He signals to friends that there is a feast in sight,

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and the bushman curses as he sees them collect and pursue. The man knows the crow's superior intelligence, and he moves his parched lips in bitter curses when they gather round. And when finally the doomed mortal stretches himself under a tree after making his last effort, the enemy, perched high above him, exercises his devilish cunning in making elaborate tests to find if life is extinct. He will drop small pieces of dead branches or bark down upon the motionless traveler, and if that fails to stir him, the evil bird descends lower and lower and — well, the white-eyed crow has participated in some grim obsequies in the dead heart of the Australian continent.

The rabbit is the wool king's nightmare. Bunny owns the land from the Pacific to the Indian, from Torres Straits to the Great Australian Bight. A glance at the atlas will tell any one what that means. The Seven Plagues of Egypt are small affairs compared to the rabbit invasion. In twenty years he has increased so rapidly that the question in Australia to-day is whether the land will belong to the rabbit or the sheep. The "milk and honey" phrase has been changed to "bilk and bunny" by the annoyed sheep-breeders, and there is no relief for them in sight.

There is no race suicide in the rabbit's code. He increases with marvelous rapidity. A single pair will, in a surprisingly short period, produce enough offspring to undermine a sheep run, and compel the breeder to shift his flocks in search of pastures new. They sweep over the land in uncountable swarms. Eighty million were destroyed in one year, but still they are increasing rapidly. The different states have tried in vain to protect their boundaries against the invasion, but still the rabbit gets in somehow. New South Wales erected a rabbit-proof fence of three hundred and fifty miles on the line which separates it from South Australia, and one of two hundred miles to protect its northern border, and yet New South Wales is to-day one of the worst rabbit-infested states of the Commonwealth. Woolgrowers are in despair.

There are sixty thousand miles of netting of one and one-half inch mesh, forty-two inches high, erected around the different runs in that state alone, yet the rabbit defies all precautions. The net-

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ting costs two hundred dollars a mile, the English manufacturers are twelve months behind in filling orders.

But while the sheep-breeder is suffering under the plague, another class of people is delighted. The rabbit has provided work for thousands. England affords a good market, and great steamers, equipped with enormous refrigerating plants, carry cargoes of a quarter of a million carcasses round the Cape of Good Hope to London. It is a sixteen-thousand-mile run, but the prices warrant it.

Men, women and children work at trapping. Children earn as much as twelve dollars a week, and education inspectors complain bitterly about the falling off in the school attendance when the rabbits make their way into a new district. Bunny stimulates trade. Dealers in carcasses and pelts follow the advancing army, and money is plentiful. On this account any stringent methods of eradication are viewed with suspicion by those who live by trapping. The visit of the renowned French scientist, Dr. Danysz of the Pasteur Institute, proved a fiasco. The doctor proposed to destroy Bunny by means of inoculation, but the Parliamentary Labor Party, thousands of whose supporters are earning a living by capturing the rabbit, made it impossible for him to carry his plans into effect. Danysz was disgusted, and the sheep men curse.

The dingo or native dog, when considered singly, is the worst foe of the unfortunate sheep-breeder. On that account he carries the highest scalp tax of all noxious animals. His scalp brings from one dollar to ten, according to the part of the country in which he is killed, and the animal tries to make the Stock Boards feel that the money is expended wisely. To kill or maim one sheep or a dozen sheep brings him no enjoyment. In one frolic he will maim five hundred. He finds enjoyment in running the fat ewes till they fall dead from exhaustion, and he will leave his teeth marks on each one of his victims. For pure cussedness the dingo leads by many lengths. The loss of sheep from native dogs in one year has exceeded a million.

Kangaroos, wallabies, hares, bandicoots, wallaroos, pademelons, and kangaroo rats all carry a scalp tax running from two cents to twelve cents per scalp, and tens of thousands of dollars are

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paid yearly to trappers — tens of millions of dollars have been paid for the extermination of noxious animals in this Weirdest Land on Earth. The kangaroo shooter, if anyway diligent, can earn a good living by killing the animals for their skins alone, and hundreds of men obtain a livelihood in this way. The big drives, in which thousands of kangaroos were slaughtered, are now a thing of the past, but in the outback district the " roo " is still plentiful.

And so the wool king suffers. His struggles are unceasing. Fire, drought, the rabbit and other noxious animals make his life a continual fight to the death, but he wins out somehow. He is the backbone of the country, and his is the victory. The five capital cities that the globetrotter knows of have not earned for Australia the title of the Land of the Golden Fleece. The man on the land did that — the man who doesn't know of the iced soda and brandy and electric fans — the man who fights the rabbits and the crows in the Silence, in the desert, in the waterless hell of the interior.

NOTE. — THE BLACK CAT for April will contain a third Pen Picture on The Weirdest Land on Earth. It will deal with the Gathering of The Golden Fleece by that vast suntanned Army of the Outback — The Stockmen, Shepherds, Shearers and "Sundowners."

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"CATECHISMS"

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

Copyright, 1909, by The Shortstory Publishing Company.

When, where, and by whom was the turning over of a new leaf first accomplished? LULU.

1. On the Eve of the year one. 2. Under a fig tree. 3. Adam.

To decide a wager will you please state whether anywhere in history or poetry it is recorded that Clay, Honey, and Poison enter into the make-up of woman and if so what, if anything, the Devil had to do with it? MELVILLE.

It is a historical fact that a famous Persian poet wrote: — In the beginning Allah took a rose, a lily, a dove, a serpent, a little honey, a Dead Sea apple, and a handful of clay. When he looked at the amalgam it was woman. He decided to make a change. But it was too late as Adam had taken her for his wife. And here is where Satan stepped in and pointed out that the rose had a thorn; the lily was fragile; the dove was timid; the serpent retained its guile, fangs, and venom; the honey clogged; the Dead Sea apple was filled with dust, and the clay was tough, difficult to blend, and impossible to eliminate.

In the best society what do guests at leading Metropolitan hotels usually order for breakfast? As I have never been away from home and am going to New York on my bridal tour I shall appreciate any helpful hint. I am eighteen and my health is good. FLOSSIE.

That depends. Should the hotel at which you stop be conducted on the European plan you will write out this order: — Coffee, Rolls, and Boiled Eggs. If, on the other hand, the American plan obtains, ask the waiter to bring you the following: —

Hot House Grapes Blood Oranges
Oatmeal — Cream
Bread Rolls Corn Muffins Scones
Chocolate
Broiled Salmon Creamed Potatoes
Omelet with Mushrooms
Porterhouse Steak — Grilled Sweet Potatoes
HOT WAFFLES — MAPLE SYRUP

If your health is *very* good, a Jumbo Squab on toast may precede the steak. Take the oranges to your room.

What is Poetic License anyway? EVALINA.

The assumption on the part of heart hungry poets like Byron that long haired men of letters may monkey with matrimony without a license.

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Will you please state whether the streets of New York were ever immortalized by a poet and if so how?

Yes, by the lines:

"Your streets are not passable —
Not even Jackassable."

Please give a beautiful example of selfish and unselfish love?
CATHERINE.

"There was once a man who loved a woman. He gave her everything he possessed, even his soul. Still unsatisfied, she said to him, 'I want the heart of your mother: bring it to me.' He did as directed, and running back to her, stumbled and fell. As the heart rolled in the dust it cried out in pain, 'Did'st hurt thyself, my son?'"

Where, when and by whom was the best throw with a boomerang made? And what was the record? DIANA.

In Australia. During the visit of the American fleet. By King Boorakula of Northern Queensland. Being refused a drink by a Boomanoomana Publican His Highness stepped into the street and after carefully examining his boomerang sent it on its flight. The curiously carved weapon circled the hotel three times, crashed through the front entrance, knocked seventeen bottles from the shelves, blackened the Publican's eye, passed through the rear window, killed a laughing Jackass on its flight to the harbor, where it encircled the entire fleet and came to grief only when, on its return trip, it essayed to round up a merry widow hat in the conning tower of the Flagship.

In the best society which is correct:
The artist's model as she appears to the naked eye
or
The artist's model as she appears to the eye naked? ROSALIND.

That depends altogether on the altogether.

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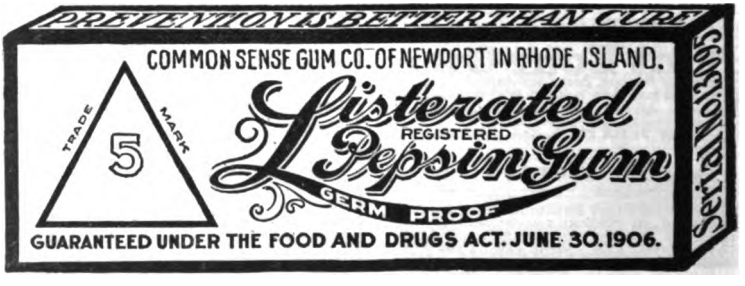

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"White Slave Trade of Today," by Edwin W. Sims, United States District Attorney in Chicago. An account of the White Slave traffic of today by the official who has already obtained the conviction of many hundreds of the miserable creatures engaged in this "business," and who, Mr. Sims says, "Have reduced the art of ruining young girls to a national and international system." Mr. Sims was the government prosecuting attorney in the famous $29,000,000.00 Standard Oil case.

"The Sins of Society," by Mr. Joseph Medill Patterson, author of "A Little Brother of the Rich."

"Why Girls go Astray," by Edwin W. Sims. Mr. Sims states he has received many letters from fathers and mothers since he began writing for **Woman's World,** whose fears and suspicions "were aroused by the warning that the girl who left her home in the country, gone up to the city and does not come home to visit, needs to be looked up." These cases have been investigated and some of the results are published in his article, "Why Girls Go Astray."

"Wolves That Prey on Women," by Jane Addams of Hull House, Chicago.

"A Word About Wayward Girls," by Mrs. Orphelia L. Amigh, Superintendent Illinois State Training School for Girls.

"Binding Up the Broken-Hearted," by Maud Ballington Booth of the Volunteers of America. An original article telling some interesting facts and experiences of her work among the men and women.

"Should Girls Be Permitted to Marry Old Men?" by Rosetta.

"The Christian Science Faith," by Mrs. Clara Louise Burnham.

"The Stage Struck Country Girl," by Elsie Janis, the youngest star on the American stage.

"The Most Interesting Thing in the World," a fascinating symposium by George Ade, George Barr McCutcheon, Forrest Crissy, William Hodge.

All of the above features, and 40 more equally striking, appear in the Star Anniversary issue of WOMAN'S WORLD, which is offered free to acquaint new readers of the exceptional merit of this publication.

Rex Beach

George Ade

FUTURE FEATURES AND FICTION

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"Terrors of the Way of Shame," by Mrs. Ophelia L. Amigh.

"Better Education On the Sex Question," by Judge Julien W. Mack.

"How to Protect Our Girls," Harry A. Parkin, the Assistant U.S. District Attorney of Chicago.

Postmaster-Gen. G. Von L. Meyer, in an article every American citizen should read.

"White Slavery In America," by Hon. Charles Nelson Crittenton.

"The Prison Disgrace of America," by Mrs. Florence Maybrick.

"The Bitter Cup," by Cy Warman.

Hon. Robert La Follette, on "The Rights and Wrongs of Women."

"A Child of the West," by Charles N. Crewdson.

"A Revolution in Practical Education," by Hon. Willett M. Hays.

"Saving Waste in School Years," by Hon. Edwin C. Cooley.

"Christian Marriages," by Cardinal Gibbons.

"The Gleaming Ghosts," a new two-part story by George Barr McCutcheon.

Geo. Barr McCutcheon

Three short stories by CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY. Two short stories by REX BEACH. New musical hits by ABE HOLZMAN, FELIX F. FEIST, JOEL P. CORIN, MABEL M'KINLEY, and others. Six love mystery stories by JAQUES FUTRELLE. Serial by ROY NORTON. "The Old Homestead," by DENMAN THOMPSON. "Odd Family Life in Foreign Lands," by BURTON HOLMES. "The Romance of the Cave Man," six related short stories by STANLEY WATERLOO. "New Arkansas Traveler Stories", by OPIE READ. "A Maid of Millions," by ONE. "What Is Sweeter Than Irish Music," a new song by CHAUNCEY OLCOTT. "The Story of a Simple Life," by MAUD RADFORD WARREN. Two thrilling boy stories, by DWIGHT MITCHELL WILEY. Stories by ROSWELL FIELD, ELLIOTT FLOWER, HENRY M. HYDE, HERBERT QUICK, and many, many others.

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THE AUTHORITIES. The above is based on official and technical reports and analyses by the following authorities: Professor M. W. Twitchell, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins), University of South Carolina; Dr. Eugene A. Smith, State Geologist, Alabama; S. S. Evans, C. E., formerly U. S. Nicaragua Survey; Professor H. Nielson, Ph.D., E. M. (Heidelberg University); Professor Richard K. Meade, Meade Laboratories, Nazareth, Pa.

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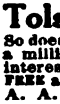

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Vol. XIV., No. 7.
Whole No., 163.

APRIL, 1909.

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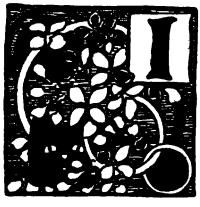
The Reduction of Singleton Worth.*

BY FREDERICK C. GLADDEN.



COMPREHEND quite perfectly," said the Hindoo doctor suavely. "You do not desire to be fatigued by the favorite modern method of undergoing a series of violent athletic exercises, combined with a severely plain diet. Very well — it is not necessary. My treatment entails no physical suffering nor inconvenience, and has invariably proved quite as efficacious. Be good enough to follow me."

Singleton Worth, bachelor, broker, fat, florid and forty-five, rose heavily and followed his lithe, slight, swarthy guide up a short staircase, along a narrow hall, at the end of which a heavy oaken door opened noiselessly, admitting them into a long, spacious chamber, which resembled, in general appearance, the cooling-off room of a Turkish bath establishment. There were a dozen or more leather couches, numerous lounging chairs of similar material, and several small tables upon which were placed smoking-utensils, illustrated magazines and papers. Otherwise the room was bare except for the thick rugs on the floor of polished hard wood. There were no pictures and no windows. It

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was lighted by incandescent bulbs placed at intervals in the walls, near the ceiling.

"Be seated," said Dr. Abkandah, courteously indicating a chair at one of the little tables, and seating himself at its opposite side. He touched a bell, and a Hindoo lad of about ten, clad in picturesque Oriental garments and wearing a huge turban, appeared. The doctor spoke a few words in the vernacular. The boy salaamed, disappeared and presently returned with small cups of coffee and nargilehs. He filled the latter deftly from a large jade jar and having seen that the pipes were properly lighted, vanished.

The doctor sipped his coffee meditatively, exhaling huge clouds of the fragrant Persian tobacco. His guest followed his example in silence, secretly wondering what was coming next, and somewhat perturbed in spirit. There was nothing in his surroundings to suggest an operating-room, and yet he had a curious inward sinking at the pit of his stomach as if he were about to submit to some severe physical ordeal. He recollected, too, with a spasm of uncontrollable regret, that he had not been at great pains to secure proper testimonials concerning the professional standing of the newly arrived practitioner, and that he was really possessed of no definite information on that head. It was true that, at the club of late, several men had told astonishing tales of extraordinary cures which had been effected in an incredibly short time by this much-heralded recent arrival. But these tales after all might be mere rumor, none of the cures authenticated, and the man a dangerous charlatan, for all he actually knew to the contrary. Unconquerable distrust welled up in his bosom. He leaned forward and drained the coffee-cup in a gulp. Then he composed himself to look with an appearance of tranquillity at the quiet little man opposite, before speaking. Dr. Abkandah's imperturbable demeanor relaxed somewhat. He even smiled, and Worth gave an involuntary gasp of relief as the doctor spoke.

"My treatment is of the most simple nature. I apprehend that you are already familiar with the theory, which many do not admit to be a fact, that each of us is possessed of a so-called astral body which, under certain conditions, by those who have

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attained the power, may be projected to places far distant from the physical body, there to represent it in all things as if the physical body were actually present."

Worth smiled incredulously. "Oh, of course I've heard of that sort of thing. Never took much stock in it though. Never knew any one who did." He was quite himself now, quite at his ease, he felt. If this fellow was one of those Theosophist chaps, why he couldn't do any harm.

Dr. Abkandah bowed with the utmost politeness. "You may have occasion to change your mind, Mr. Worth," he said. "However, it is not important that you should do so now. In fact, it is quite as well that you should feel as you do on such matters, because you can then have the less unwillingness to submit to my treatment. I do not propose to send your astral body forth. On the contrary it will remain here and your consciousness will remain here with it. Your physical body will, however, go abroad. Its wanderings, which you must follow and observe mentally, may occasion you some uneasiness. But as I have already indicated, you will be conscious of no physical pain. That is all I am at liberty to explain to you. Do you still wish to undertake the treatment?"

Worth imagined he began to feel a little drowsy, but he certainly was extremely comfortable. This idea of sending his body out somewhere and leaving him quietly enjoying his coffee and pipe, appeared to him the very quintessence of excellent jesting. He resolved, however, to enter into the spirit of the joke.

"By all means, Doctor," he cried. "I should like nothing better."

Hardly had the words left his mouth when the room grew suddenly dark. He saw dimly, as through a thick mist, the shadowy outline of the doctor's form, erect and menacing as it appeared to his numbing faculties. He heard a strange chant — a weird clash of copper cymbals — there came a brilliant flash of violet light, thrice repeated. He gasped for breath, struggled to rise, and fell back in his chair unconscious.

When he came to himself the doctor had vanished and he was alone. At first he had some difficulty in realizing where he was. But gradually, as his thinking powers resumed their sway, the

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recollection of his recent talk with the Hindoo doctor came to him. His mind was as clear as a bell, and he experienced with keen enjoyment a consciousness of mental power and alertness which he had never before possessed. Every object in the room stood forth in astonishing distinctness before his mental vision. With one rapid glance he completed and tabulated an exact inventory of its entire contents. The pipe which he had been smoking lay on the table at his hand beside the half-finished cup of coffee. He reached forth his hand to take up the pipe. It would be more correct to say that he attempted to reach forth his hand, for though he was painfully aware of the volition to do so, nothing happened. His hand did not move from the arm of the chair on which it was resting. He sprang to his feet — that is, he intended to spring to his feet — but again there was no resultant to the mental impulse. Again and again he endeavored, with all the force of his will, to compel his muscles to respond to the demands of his brain. But always with the same result. There was absolutely no response, and he remained seated, leaning back in his chair, not having changed the position of any portion of his body by the slightest fraction of an inch, from the time that he awoke. He became gradually aware of a curious but delicious sensation of perfect bodily ease. He felt as light as a feather and as if he might easily vault over a house. Or, rather, as his mind, working with lightning-like rapidity, told him, he felt no sensation at all. And yet he was in entire possession of all his intellectual faculties and therefore keenly alive to his sensations. His mind told him so. It also told him that this was all perfectly ridiculous. He laughed aloud at the extraordinary state of things. That is, he meant to laugh, but the laugh died in his throat, or would have died there if it had ever got that far, which it did not. He became angry, furious, and particularly so at that ass of a doctor! If he ever got hold of him! In the midst of all this perplexity he recalled the doctor's curious last remark:

"Your astral body will remain here and your consciousness will remain with it. Your physical body will, however, go abroad. Its wanderings, which you must follow and observe mentally, may occasion you some uneasiness —"

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So this was what had happened to him. Of course! He might have guessed it before. Well, of all the confounded useless things he had ever heard of, an astral body was certainly the most abandoned concentration of futility. But his physical body — wandering abroad — and without any controlling mind! Great Heavens!

What would it do? "The Lord knows that old physical body always needed all the mind it could conveniently accumulate," soliloquized Worth. He was not to be left long in doubt on this subject, however, for he became almost immediately cognizant of the fact that things were happening elsewhere.

By just what intellectual or supernatural process he became aware of the events which followed and were borne in upon his inner consciousness, he was unable to determine to his own satisfaction. Even his wonderfully quickened perception was insufficient to enable him to analyze the phenomenon. He *knew* he was still in the same chair in the doctor's room. All the objects in that room were as clearly visible as they had been from the moment of his awakening. And yet he seemed to be not there, but on Broadway, and keenly alive to all that was occurring on that thoroughfare. And this sense of being in two places at the same time was sufficiently perplexing in itself to leave no unemployed section of his gray matter for the purpose of solving the other coincident problem. Indeed, any transient wonderment at the ability to see and hear things which were transpiring at a place where he knew he was not, was quickly swallowed up in a most absorbing interest in observing the things themselves.

For at this instant he appeared on the scene. Perhaps it would be more correct, in view of what shortly became apparent to his much perturbed mind, to say that "it" appeared on the scene. Singleton Worth recognized his extremely familiar self, clad in his customary habiliments. But at that point the recognition ceased. For there was an expression of absolute blankness upon the face of the individual that was now parading down Broadway that he indignantly repudiated as a correct simulacrum of his own business countenance.

"Great Scott!" (The doctor's words again flashed into his

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head.) "That is my physical body without any brains attached. Now we *are* up against it!"

The hands of a jeweller's clock indicated the hour of eight-thirty. Worth made a rapid calculation. "Eight-thirty in the evening, and I came into this rascally doctor's house at about eleven-thirty in the morning." How many horrible things had happened since then? His soul sank in dread; but he was none the less able to escape the cognizance of the subsequent adventures of the external semblance of himself.

It walked at a leisurely gait down Broadway, occasionally bumping into pedestrians and mechanically apologizing by a bow and a polite lift of its hat. At street corners Worth's agony was augmented by the extraordinary narrowness of Its escapes from being run over. But It ploughed stodgily along and Worth began to hope again.

"Now, if the blamed thing doesn't meet anybody It knows," he reflected, "It may pull through. Maybe It's got sense enough to go home and go to bed."

This proved not to be the case, however, as Worth very shortly discovered. For his bodily alter ego, instead of turning to the right at Madison Square into Twenty-seventh Street and then west to Worth's bachelor apartment on that street, held steadily south into the Square, where It sat down on a bench and proceeded to light and dispose of a cigar.

By this time Worth had begun to realize that this physical self, whose peregrinations he was forced to observe, was following something very like a preconceived and logical course of action, being evidently guided by a sort of animal instinct from one place to another and from one experience to the next. It was like a blind horse that, having been driven for years over a milk route, would stop at the proper houses with no guidance from the driver, purely from the force of habit.

He strove to ascertain what the moving impulse could be, and presently decided that his other self was simply repeating his own movements of some previous evening. If this theory were correct, and second thought convinced him that it was entirely possible, then It would go on through the evening, blindly doing over again whatever things he had done on that former

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night which It seemed to be re-living. But which of all of the evenings of the past could it be? Certainly an evening when he had smoked a cigar in Madison Square. Probably that of his last previous visit to that place. When was that? He cudgelled his memory. It came to him in an instant. Two weeks since. At least, two weeks prior to the unfortunate day when he foolishly entrusted his miserable self to the tender mercies of that Hindoo doctor. But whether that was this morning, or some day weeks ago, was beyond his present knowledge. At any rate he must strive to recall what happened on that night. Yes, he recollected that after dinner he had gone over to Madison Square to smoke a cigar just as that thing was doing now. But what next? Where did he go? Whom did he see?

Merciful Heavens! And Powers of Darkness! For at this moment the figure on the bench arose, threw away the end of Its unfinished cigar and, crossing the park to Fifth Avenue, walked with a rapid stride across Twenty-third Street, headed south, as his recollection pitilessly predicted, for Washington Square. If Worth had experienced agony during the walk down Broadway and through the dragging puffs of that interminable cigar, that had indeed been slight compared to the torture and dismay that now shook his very soul. The terrible shrinking suspicion grew every moment into an appalling certainty. He strove to disbelieve his memory,— to hope that even yet he might be mistaken. But it was all of no avail. Nothing could save him now. For the unescapable reminiscence would not be denied. On the evening he had last smoked a cigar in the park, he had called on Elizabeth Schermerhorn!

And Elizabeth, on that other evening, the first time he had seen her after her return from a five years' sojourn in Europe, had been exceedingly kind. Quite surprisingly so, in fact. So much so that Singleton Worth had begun to cherish dreams that possibly — The thought filled him with anguish. This had really been the bottom reason for his attempt at a reduction of his too evident figure. And now that thing! — that block! — that automaton! that fatal image of his own unfortunate self — was pressing relentlessly onward to become the instrument of his

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undoing — the destroyer of his placid vision of future happiness! Was ever a more cruel fate thrust upon a helpless and innocent victim?

An automobile whizzed through a cross street as the figure of himself stepped from the curb. "Run over It — Smash It!" he shrieked in mental objurgation. But no such luck. With a sharp "honk" of the horn, a quick twist of the steering-wheel and a muttered oath from the chauffeur, the machine skidded to one side, missing the dream-like pedestrian by less than six inches.

A burly mendicant bumped into It. It tipped Its hat and strode on undisturbed. The tramp slouched after, skulking close to the house-line.

"Rob him! knock him on the head! throw him down a cellarway! He's got a good watch and plenty of money" implored the unhappy Worth. But as the foot-pad crept nearer to his intended victim a blue-coated, brass-buttoned minion of the law hove in sight, and the man took to his heels. The short remaining distance was speedily traversed and Worth, now in the lowest depths of soul-racking despondency, beheld his image mount the front steps of the Schermerhorn mansion on Waverly Place.

The footman took the card which the figure of a man with Its curiously accurate repetition of the events of the former evening had ready, and ushered It into the parlor. In an indescribably short space of time, or so at least it seemed to the frenzied Worth, Miss Schermerhorn entered the room, holding out both hands with her most charming smile. If she had seemed beautiful to Singleton Worth on the occasion of his previous visit, she was a thousand times more attractive to his distracted mental vision, clad as she now was in a bewitching gown of a gray, shimmery material that displayed her tall, graceful figure to its utmost advantage. The effigy on the sofa sat unmoved, the same vacuous expression on its countenance.

"Stand up and shake hands, for Heaven's sake," begged Worth from the depths of his tortured soul. "Even a wooden man would have sense enough to do that."

But the figure on the couch remained calmly seated while

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the young woman moved forward, the inane expression on Its face unchanged, as she drew nearer.

"Why, Mr. Worth, what can be the matter with you, — are you ill?" exclaimed Miss Schermerhorn in mingled amazement and alarm. "Let me get you a glass of wine." She rang the bell, gave hurried directions, and the butler returned instantly with a decanter and some wine glasses. Hastily filling one, the girl handed it to the figure on the couch. Feeling the glass in Its hand, Worth's unfortunate image carried it to Its mouth and gulped the contents down with one swallow, and without the slightest change of expression.

"Do you feel better now?" queried his hostess anxiously. Still no reply — but the creature sat there with the same inane countenance, holding the empty wine-glass in Its hand. In desperation, the young woman filled the glass once more from the decanter. And once more, with automaton-like precision, it was emptied in the twinkling of an eye, still with no apparent restoration of any symptoms of mentality. Miss Schermerhorn looked sharply at the figure of a man before her. The expression of solicitude passed suddenly from her face. A suspicion had been aroused which developed rapidly into certainty. Worth, now in the very abandonment of despair, saw her countenance take on first a hot flush of anger, which was rapidly followed by a look of utter and intense disgust. She rang the bell sharply. The footman appeared.

"Wilkins," said Miss Schermerhorn icily, "Mr. Worth will be glad if you will assist him to the outer door. You need not trouble yourself to go farther with him. And Wilkins," she added, as the man bowed in silence while his mistress retreated to a door leading into an adjoining room, "I am not at home hereafter when Mr. Worth calls."

The footman stood in the outer vestibule a moment watching the retreating figure. There seemed no necessity for calling a cab, as he had first intended doing. Whatever might be the mental condition of the departing visitor, there was no physical inability apparent, at least as far as the power of locomotion was concerned. For no hesitation nor uncertainty was displayed in the manner in which Worth's counterfeit present-

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ment descended the long flight of steps. At the bottom It halted for a moment, drew a cigar from Its pocket and lighted it in a perfectly natural way. The footman shook his head, mystified beyond comprehension, turned, and went back into the house, closing the door softly behind him.

Worth glanced again around the room in which his spirit was imprisoned, in an attempt to escape further knowledge of these disgraceful happenings. There was still no change in any respect. The pipe still lay on the table within reach of his hand, which still rested on the arm of the chair. All the other objects in the room were as plainly discernible as ever. And he was still utterly unable to perform the slightest physical function which his mind directed and desired, as renewed efforts in that direction speedily assured him. He had passed, however, from anxiety and distress concerning the adventures of his physical self to profound indifference. He cared little what became of that useless body. It had successfully accomplished the destruction of his fondest hopes and now it might proceed on Its fated career to any wretched end. Nothing could matter.

All these thoughts passed through the wretched broker's mind in the slight period of time consumed in the lighting of the cigar. But he noticed now that something had happened to his walking delegate. For the first time it displayed symptoms of uncertainty. It seemed not to know what to do next nor where to go. And Its appearance had remarkably changed. The characteristic ruddy, almost apoplectic complexion had been succeeded in an instant by a pallor that was almost sickly in its aspect. The double chin had nearly vanished, the corpulent waist line had shrunk a full third, and Its clothes hung loosely on Its diminished frame. There was a distressed, haunted look on Its face which was pitiful to see as It stood on the curb in front of the house, looking first in one direction and then in another like a hunted animal.

"Serves you jolly well right," reflected Worth with a kind of bitter joy. "You ought to get thin. You've done enough to make a fat man into a ghost in twenty-four hours."

And then he realized what the trouble really was. The

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schedule had been interrupted by the events which had taken place at Miss Schermerhorn's house. Certainly *he* had not been summarily ejected on the occasion of his last visit. Quite the contrary, he remembered only too well, with a deep sense of his loss. And there being no further possibility of proceeding exactly to repeat all the experiences of that prior evening, the creature was helpless.

Just then It crossed the street with a hesitating step, and, going into Washington Square, sat down on one of the benches. Worth's fears returned in greater numbers. For it at once occurred to him that the thing had gone back in the schedule to Its last performance before calling on Miss Schermerhorn. If that were true it would take up the thread at that point and go woodenly ahead once more in Its attempts to repeat the subsequent acts. As soon as It had finished that cigar, It would probably return to her house and attempt to make another call. The idea was maddening. The figure smoked stolidly on. The cigar was nearly finished, — a few more puffs and It would rise and throw it away, and then — But the mental strain had been too great, and consciousness departed.

He was roused by a voice which at first he did not recognize. But as he strove to recover his senses, the soft tones of the speaker took on some measure of familiarity, and he seemed to hear, while still in a half-wakened dreamy state, these words:

"There can be absolutely no doubt that extraordinary physical changes in the human body are sometimes produced by and are directly traceable as the effects of severe mental strain or suffering. These phenomena are so universally acknowledged and accredited as to be no longer disputable. You will therefore readily perceive, gentlemen, that as in the excellent demonstration of my system which you have recently witnessed, — " But here the voice, which had been growing fainter and fainter, faded away entirely, and Worth's next conscious impression was that some one was bathing his temples with a wet sponge, and that there was an exceedingly pungent odor in his nostrils. He sat up in the chair with an effort. And then he realized that he was still in the same place and became aware that there was a fresh cup of coffee on the table by his side. He drank it

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greedily. Dr. Abkandah, from the other side of the table, spoke with his customary softness:

"You will find it wiser, Mr. Worth, to go into the country for a few days that you may become accustomed to your changed physical condition before resuming the regular routine of your life. You will observe that I have provided you with appropriate garments, as those which you wore when you came here would now hardly be becoming."

Worth started to his feet and sprang to a mirror. He was indeed differently clad, in a new, well-fitting suit of gray. He gazed at first with alarmed surprise, but afterward with complacent satisfaction, at his changed appearance. He had evidently lost about fifty pounds in weight. His face, a trifle pale, looked ten years younger, although his hair was slightly tinged with gray at the temples.

"The hair will resume its natural color in a day or two, Mr. Worth," said the doctor. "And the country air will quite restore your normal complexion. And now, as I am extremely busy, may I ask you to allow me to show you to the carriage which is waiting. You will find your railway ticket and full directions for your journey in your inside pocket; also that all necessary arrangements have been made for your entertainment at your destination. You are provided with sufficient funds. My charges, as you will recall, were paid in advance, and were inclusive of these minor details. I trust you will live long to enjoy your improved physical condition." He rose and led the way to the door.

"But, Doctor," expostulated the bewildered broker, a thousand anxious questions rushing to his lips.

"Not a word now, Mr. Worth," replied the doctor firmly. "This is my invariable rule. On your return I shall cheerfully answer any inquiries you may choose to make."

And Worth was hurried down into a carriage which whirled him rapidly to the depot en route for his country visit.

After a pleasant stay of ten days in an obscure village in southern Pennsylvania, Worth found himself back again in the city and drove directly to Dr. Abkandah's house. It was vacant, with a "To Let" sign hanging out. He went then to his

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apartment, letting himself in with his latch-key, his valet being away. There was a pile of letters on his table and one on top was sealed with an Oriental seal. Worth tore it open eagerly, and read the following brief message:

> DEAR MR. WORTH: I am unexpectedly recalled to India. I leave you my benediction. Remember one thing always. There are sometimes things which happen in a man's life that can never be explained. And those things are far better forgotten. ABKANDAH.

. . . . . .

"Do you know, Singleton," said his wife, as they lolled back blissfully in their steamer chairs on their honeymoon trip abroad, reveling in the wondrous beauty of sky and sea, "I had the queerest experience one evening about three months ago. It was when you were away in the country taking that wonderful cure that fairly made a new man of you. I have often thought I'd like to tell you about it, and yet it was so strange and incomprehensible that sometimes I almost believe I dreamed it, though it seemed terribly real at the time. But something has always prevented me from telling you about it. Do you think I ought to?"

"My dearest Elizabeth," said Worth, taking her hand surreptitiously under cover of the rug, "was it disagreeable?"

"Excessively so," rejoined Mrs. Worth emphatically.

"But after all did it turn out all right in the end?"

She gazed at him fondly: "Yes, it turned out gloriously."

"Well, then, my darling," said Worth easily, "if it turned out all right, what's the use of hanging on to a disagreeable memory, or bringing the slightest cloud on the perfect happiness of our blissful existence. The best thing to do about that experience is just to forget it."

"I believe you are right, Singleton," she replied, returning the pressure of his fingers with a little squeeze. "At any rate it certainly wouldn't do any good to tell you."

And she never did.

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The Insuring of Mrs. Harrigan.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

IT was Fenwick's first trip in the employ of the Gotham and Glory Life Assurance Company. He had talked much, but business had not come his way. It requires an exceptionally good talker to interest a farmer in life assurance. Fenwick had just begun to realize this when he chanced to meet Maloney.

"It's no use wastin' yer breath on me," said that individual, "but I'll put you wise to some sure business."

Within Fenwick's breast Hope flared up and made him gasp. "Where?" he cried.

"Turn up by the lake and walk along by the pine woods till you strike Harrigan's place. Harrigan takes out a policy with every insurance man that comes his way."

Fenwick shut his bag with a snap and hurried up the long, hot and dusty road.

Harrigan was sitting before his open door when the insurance agent approached. The farmer was a thin, consumptive-looking man, with the weary look of the confirmed pessimist. Fenwick summed him up as an easy victim, and with much confidence he unloosed his opening speech.

Harrigan listened patiently. "Is it the biggest and best company in the world?" he asked languidly.

"Certainly," cried Fenwick. "We have five hundred and eleven millions in reserve. We paid out ninety-seven millions in claims last year. No humbugging with our society, sir. No trouble for the unfortunate widows and orphans." He unlocked his bag and pulled out a mass of insurance literature. "And the rates, Mr. Harrigan! Now, what will be your age at your next birthday?"

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The farmer whittled a piece of pine and contemplated the little pile of chips.

"It wasn't myself I was thinking of," he said, dreamily.

"Wife, sir?" queried Fenwick briskly, sorting out his forms with nervous fingers. "What age is she, sir?"

Harrigan stood up and turned towards the door of the shack. "Come inside and we'll talk it over," he said.

The agent was jubilant. His fat face glowed with delight. His heart throbbed mightily as visions of a fat commission floated before his mind.

Harrigan motioned him to a broken-backed chair near the fireplace, while he perched himself on a stool between his visitor and the door. The farmer seemed to be pondering over some problem, and Fenwick, seeing that he was not listening to the remarks about the benefits of life assurance, stopped talking and waited for him to speak.

After a few minutes' silence, Harrigan drew his stool closer and leaned forward.

"Wish you had turned up last week," he murmured.

"Better late than never," said Fenwick cheerily. "I'm in time if your good lady is—"

"That's just it," interrupted Harrigan moodily, "*she's dead.*"

The agent's backbone seemed to lose its stiffening force, and his body sagged. The information startled him.

"I—I thought you wanted to insure her," he stammered.

"So I do," said Harrigan quietly.

Fenwick tried to smile, but fear smoothed out the wrinkles that mirth tried to create, and left his face white and ghastly. He thought of the two miles of dusty road that separated Harrigan from his nearest neighbor, and the mournful sobbing of the pines tautened his nerves.

"But—but you cannot insure her," he spluttered; "it's impossible."

Harrigan reached forward and tapped him hard with a bony forefinger. "No one knows she's dead," he whispered.

The agent's throat became suddenly parched, and he breathed painfully. The weird song of the pines increased in volume.

Again the farmer leaned forward and tapped him impressively.

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A toil-battered hand pointed to a long box beneath the stretcher, and Fenwick shivered.

"She's in that," he murmured; "and I want you to insure her for a thousand dollars. Wait a moment and I'll show her to you."

The limp and perspiring agent glanced towards the door, but Harrigan read his thoughts. He reached forward and grasped Fenwick by the collar, and then, stooping down, kicked the lid off the long box. A figure wrapped in canvas lay inside it.

"Good Lord!" shrieked the insurance man. "Wha — what happened to her?"

"I fixed her with this axe," said Harrigan calmly. "She has been talking too much of late, an' I got tired of her tongue."

The agent showed symptoms of apoplexy. The chair creaked as his spineless body sank against the broken back.

"Come on, wake up," cried Harrigan irritably. "Get out your forms and your pen and ink, and we'll insure her. I'll give you two hundred dollars out of the deal when I get their check."

He let the head of the axe fall noisily upon the floor, and the agent came to life again.

"Yes, sir; oh, yes, sir, I will," he stammered. "Five thousand dollar policy? Yes, sir, certainly."

Harrigan juggled playfully with the axe, and the fountain pen travelled at full speed across the printed forms.

"Wha — what name, sir?" gasped Fenwick. "What is — er — what was the lady's name?"

"Mary Ann Harrigan, maiden name O'Brien," answered the farmer.

"Ah, yes. Ann Harrigan Mary, maiden name O'Ryan," mumbled the nervous agent. "Wha — what age will she be next birthday?"

Harrigan looked puzzled. He balanced the axe in his hand and contemplated the ceiling.

"Guess she won't have one," he said, slowly.

Fenwick stopped writing. "We must put in what age she — she will be next b — b — birthday," he gurgled.

"Very good," said Harrigan, "I'll see what age she was last birthday. It's entered in this 'History of the Revolution.'"

He moved across the room to consult the worn volume that lay

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upon the mantel-shelf, and the agent saw an opportunity to escape. With a bound he cleared the stool that blocked his path to the door, dashed down the green patch before the house and, springing over the low stone wall, fled at top speed, leaving proposal forms, fountain pen, and handgrip on Harrigan's table. A shout came down the wind, and a stone whizzed past him, and his short legs ate up the dusty road at a terrific gait.

An hour afterwards, Fenwick, with clothes all torn and splashed, breathlessly related the story of the murder of Mrs. Harrigan to the policeman in the nearest town, and when he had finished the officer propped himself against the saloon and laughed till the tears raced down his cheeks.

"Have ye run all the way?" asked the Law.

Fenwick snapped out an affirmative. The other's mirth annoyed him.

"Well, that's a durned shame," grinned the officer. "You're a fat man and you may be troubled with heart disease. I'll have to be speaking to Harrigan, or he'll be killing one of you fellers yet. You're the sixth insurance man that he has played the trick on this last month. That's a dummy stuffed with wool that he has in the box. He never had a wife, to my knowledge, and I've been round here this twenty years."

And again the Law propped itself against the saloon to ease the merriment bubbling within, while the representative of the Gotham and Glory Life Assurance Company hurried down the street.

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A Light in the Desert.*

BY CLIFFORD HOWARD.

WITH deep sighs of relief the two men slid from their horses at the edge of the well. Already the shadows of the giant Panamints had cast the shroud of night upon the stygial sands of Death Valley. Only the topmost peaks, ten thousand feet above, still saw the day, and their roseate pinnacles, incarnate valedictions of the descending sun, glimmered in the infinite altitude as torturing lights of heaven upon the brink of Hades.

Before the last glow had faded into the blackness, the two men had made their camp, a sparking fire of tule and mesquite was ablaze upon the edge of the oasis, the wearied horses were grazing eagerly upon the rank bunch grass, and their owners, recumbent upon the ground, were munching in hungry silence.

"I tell you what it is, Hoskins," remarked one of them at last, as he cut himself a slice of the canned beef, "this working for Uncle Sam and the glory of science is all right enough as poetry, but painfully unsatisfying to a man's independence. I have had just about all I want of it — shut up in a moldy office half the year and hid from the face of man the other six months, freezing in the mountains or burning the life out of your throat in the desert. I'm going to quit."

"Fine talk, Doc," commented the other — "noble ambition. What are you going to do? — turn philanthropist and take old Bailey's claim off his hands?"

"No philanthropy about it, Hoskins. My hunch regarding that old fellow's mine has developed into a gilt-edge cinch. I got a letter at Daggett from the assay office. The samples of ore I

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took out of a little drift of my own making average over sixty dollars! Bailey missed the ledge entirely and has been going farther from it at every pick. Thought I'd keep this to myself, but you're entitled to know it, Hoskins, as a safety valve to my exuberant joy."

"Bully for you, Doc!" congratulated Hoskins. "What did you say was the price of your option on the claim?"

"Nine hundred and fifty — good until next Thursday, the tenth. We ought to get into Rhyolite by Tuesday; and then, with a sheet of paper and a decent pen, I'll bid farewell to your Uncle Samuel and embark upon the sea of manly independence. No philanthropy or charity about this, my dear fellow; nothing but pure, natural, human selfishness. If there could exist such a specimen as a sane altruist, and I happened to be that one, I suppose I would go to old Bailey and show the gambling whiskey-drinker that he's got good values in his mine and refuse to allow him to sacrifice it to me, notwithstanding that he thinks he's sticking me now for two hundred per cent. more than it will ever be worth. But as I'm only an ordinary mortal and am not losing my wits, I'm going to do business along natural and conventional lines. We're all selfish at heart — every one of us. All business is selfish — all charity is selfish — indirectly, perhaps, but selfish at bottom, all the same. I am blunt enough to admit it regarding myself, and that's the only real difference between me and some others.

"'However good a man may be,
Or noble, brave or kind;
However great his charity
Or sacrifice designed,
He acts for self and self alone,
And not for man or friend:
To pleasure gain or pain disown
Is but his selfish end.'

"I don't know who wrote the rhyme, but it sums up my philosophy to a finish."

"Mine, too," acquiesced Hoskins, preparing to light a cigarette. "But don't you know, Bradley," he continued, after a meditative puff or two, "I can't help questioning sometimes whether there is not something in us, beyond and apart from our 'self' instinct, which on occasion prompts us to sacrifice ourselves for others,

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without our knowing why we do it and without a thought or a possibility of any personal consideration; an expression, as it were, of that higher, impersonal charity which the moralists assert must be conceded in order to account for the cohesion of society and the drift toward universal brotherhood."

"You're too metaphysical for me, Hoskins. I am not ready to admit any such duality of motive. So far as I am concerned, I am of the earth, earthy, and I can't conceive of my doing anything for another, whatever it may cost me by way of sacrifice or pain, which is not in its final analysis reducible to pure, personal selfishness."

"That's all right, Doc. I'm more than seven-eighths ready to agree with you. But, all the same, it sticks in my mental craw that each of us — and you're no exception to the rule — holds somewhere in reserve a modicum of this higher charity; a something which is capable, when the opportunity offers, of rising above the personal or the self and performing an act of pure unselfishness."

The young Doctor of Science shrugged his shoulders and smiled indulgently. "You ought to have been a theologian," he commented. — "Hello! what's that?"

A sudden cough had sounded out of the darkness. The two men turned, and by the glow of the fire beheld a human form crouching in the grass.

"Hi, there, brother! Who are you, and what do you want?" demanded Hoskins with blunt amiability and a prompt precautionary hold upon his gun.

The man straightened up and advanced slowly toward them. By his ragged clothes, his unkempt hair and beard, and by the furtive, half-malignant expression of his eyes, they classified him at once as a prisoner of the desert; one of earth's castaways, the moral stragglers who wander into the valley of death, lured by the silence, the desolation, the loneliness, wherein to hide from their crimes among men. The two explorers had seen his kind before. It was not uncommon to find them, one at a time, lurking about their camp, morose, suspicious, uncommunicative, yet drawn to the presence of their fellow-kind through some impelling instinct.

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It was something of a surprise, therefore, when the man before them not only approached but spoke to them of his own accord: "You'll pardon me, strangers," he said, speaking with nervous quickness, "but I'm banking on it that you're square and ain't going to refuse to give me a helpin' hand. You're the first white men I've spoke to for goin' on two years. Why I ain't clean locoed, only the Lord Almighty can tell you. I've got a wife and a thousand dollars waitin' for me on the outside; but I daren't go; I daren't get away. Somebody's got to go for me, and I take it you fellows ain't goin' to refuse me. I got a hunch you'll give me a fair deal."

He had rattled on in a breathless sort of haste. He stopped now and eyed the two men curiously.

"Sit down and have a bite of something with us," invited Bradley.

"Thanks," returned the stranger. "It looks almighty good alongside o' Indian fodder." He sat down and ate two or three eager mouthfuls. Then he desisted, and went on with his talk: "You've heard of the Garcia case — Alfonso Garcia, the big rancher down at San Bernardino, who got into Death Valley here, some four years ago, and ain't been heard from since? Some said he was murdered and some thought he just naturally died of the desert, like many a poorer devil. Anyhow, there's a standing reward of a thousand dollars, put up by his wife, for the man who can furnish the proof of what's become of him. And that thousand dollars is mine. D'ye hear me? It's mine! I've found his body — his bones; and day and night for sixteen months, mind you, I've watched 'em and guarded 'em. If any other man had so much as laid his eyes on 'em, I'd 'a' killed him! They're mine — I found 'em — and that thousand dollars goes to me! It's mine! There ain't no man can hold it back from me. I'm goin' to get it, if I have to live another sixteen months in Hell waitin' for it. I'm goin' back to my wife and my folks clean-handed. I swiped my pardner's grub stake — five hundred dollars; I ain't denyin' it to you. I didn't set out to do it, but I done it; but there ain't any man ever dare throw it at me. He'll have his five hundred when he or anybody else sees me again. All I want is a fresh start, and, by Heaven, I'm goin' to have it! I'm not sayin'

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it ain't right what's come to me for what I've done. I've took my medicine; and I don't need to tell you men what that means — a-livin' down here in the valley o' death; but when you've got a wife on the outside, and a kid, and it's only them that keeps you stickin' to the game instead o' layin' down your hand to the buzzards, you can figure it out for yourself what it does to a man's peace o' mind, to set out here in the desert and watch the sun come up and go down day after day and month after month, with a thousand dollars starin' you in the face each day and your wife a-callin' to you in your dreams at night. There's men that have gone clean crazy and laid down and died after lookin' at the water mirage out there on the sands for a couple of hours. And here's me, a-burnin' in Hades for sixteen months — sixteen ages — and Heaven standin' wide open before me!"

He stopped and fixed his haggard eyes upon his two auditors with a look shading uncannily from intense fierceness to one of appealing despair.

"Why haven't you gone and claimed the reward?" asked Hoskins, after the man had swallowed another mouthful. "Why have you waited all this time?"

"*Why!*" retorted the man fiercely. "Do you suppose I'd leave those bones layin' there for somebody else, maybe, to come along and find while I was gone? And what show would I have if Garcia's folks was minded to turn me down? And ain't I said to you why I'm out here? Do you think I'm a fool, to go back before I've got the cash in my pocket to make good?"

"I see," returned Hoskins; "and I guess you are right about it. You want some one to notify Garcia's people and testify to it that you're entitled to the reward. Well, I guess there won't be any trouble about our doing that much for you."

"That's all I'm askin' of you, my friend; and I don't ask you to move a hand till you're satisfied that I'm tellin' the truth to you. Here's Garcia's bunch o' keys. His name and address is on the tag. I guess maybe you can't see it by this light — but it's there."

He passed the ring with the keys over to Hoskins, who scrutinized the lettering on the aluminum tag, holding it up so as to permit the glow of the fire to illumine it. "Yes, I can make it out," he said — "'Alfonso Garcia, San Bernardino, California.'"

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"I found 'em in the sand, close by where his body was burned and buried," continued the man; "and this handkerchief, too, with his initials in the corner."

"Must have been murdered and robbed," commented Bradley.

"'Taint for me to say," answered the stranger, carefully replacing the keys and the handkerchief in his pocket. "But you can satisfy yourself as to that, maybe, by diggin' up his bones; and that's what I'm askin' you to do. I ain't ever touched 'em yet" (and he instinctively crossed himself), "and there ain't any other man goin' to touch 'em without I say so. If you're goin' to give me a fair deal — and I have it here" (pointing to his breast) "that you men are white and mean to stand by me — why, it's no more'n right that you should see his body with your own eyes, so you can swear to Garcia's folks that it's the truth I'm tellin' you. Let 'em have it that you are witness and will take oath to it, that the thousand dollars belongs to me. It's mine — and you're goin' to see that it's handed over to me. There ain't no man or no law can hold it back from me! I can wait another week or another month, maybe, till you can get his people to come out here with you for the remains and bring me my money. I ain't askin' charity of you. Half of the cash is yours, if you'll have it. All I want is the five hundred, to clear my name and give me another chance. Is it a go, friends?"

"Sure thing," responded Hoskins. "We'll do what we can for you, old man, and we're not asking any pay for it, either, outside of actual expenses, perhaps. Come around in the morning, early — we must be moving before sun-up — and we'll have a look at Garcia's grave and his remains. My friend, Doc Bradley, here, is an expert on skeletons. Give him a couple of ribs and a jaw of some old dead-and-gone Methuselah, and he'll tell you more about his personal appearance, and his habits and his ancestors, than the old fellow ever knew himself."

A smile of relief, of actual joy, lighted up the man's face as he rose. "Thanks, friends. I knowed you'd make good. I'll sleep happy tonight, and when she calls me I can tell her at last that I'm comin' — comin' home. It's 'Adios' to you, then, till the morning"; and with crouching body and soft, furtive step he slipped away and was swallowed up in the black desert night.

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In the twilight of the dawn two men followed laboriously in the wake of another as he pushed forward with intense nervous haste through the dry, yielding sand. Suddenly he stopped and pointed to a clump of mesquite. Close by it was a slight hollow in the ground, covered over with dried twigs and grass. As the two men joined him he knelt down and carefully removed the coverings. Beneath them, in the center of the depression, lay a small mound, with bits of charred wood and cloth lying about it and upon it; and protruding in ghastly bareness from one side of it was the upper portion of the tibia of a human limb.

The man rose slowly and pointed to the grave. "There," he said with unaffected solemnity, "is the body, the remains, of Alfonso Garcia."

The realization that they had been made the confidants of this lone man's secret, the secret that he had guarded for all these torturing months of loneliness and despairing hope, the secret in which was bound up all there was to him of life, would have touched the hearts of men far more hardened than were these two who now stood by in ready sympathy and willingness to help.

"See for yourself," continued the man. "I can't touch 'em; I daren't! But it's no more'n right that they be dug up, now that I got witnesses and so you can satisfy yourself that you ain't sendin' Garcia's folks up here on some fool errand."

Bradley nodded his head in approval, and without further comment got down on his knees and began a careful excavation with his hands, deftly scooping out the sand and pieces of charcoal that filled the loosely made grave. The bones lay near the surface. One or two of them he lifted out, then carefully replaced. Others he did not disturb, but examined them where they lay. He did not undertake to uncover the entire skeleton. He had soon seen enough to satisfy him, and after the other two had likewise been satisfied with a sight of these gruesome fragments of mortal being, he threw back the sand and hid them again from view.

"He's there all right," remarked the man, a look of satisfaction glowing in his eyes.

"Yes, I guess there's no doubt about your having a good case," responded Hoskins, "and we'll undertake to see that you get

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whatever you're entitled to. You're quite sure about the offer of the reward, are you?"

"Saw it with my own eyes," answered the man — "a standing reward of a thousand dollars to any one who'd furnish information as to the death or the whereabouts of the body of Alfonso Garcia. Not likely anybody's got it yet, is there, with Garcia still a-layin' there in the sand?" and the man's eyes gleamed with a new joy. Already the spirit of his freedom and his resurrection was upon him.

Bradley had been looking at him with intense earnestness. "See here, my friend," he said, "I have a proposition to make to you: You have waited long enough for your reward. There is no telling how much longer you may have to wait if you are going to stay here until Garcia's heirs, and the law, and his widow, and who knows what else besides, may have to be consulted and satisfied. Turn your claim over to me. I'll give you a thousand dollars for it. You're in no position to enforce your rights if there should be any hitch about the matter. It's different with me. I am free to fight, and I can afford to wait. You can't." He took a heavy canvas envelope from the inside pocket of his coat, and taking from it a small package of bills deliberately counted out ten of them. "There," he said, "is your thousand dollars; and Garcia's bones there and that bunch of keys and the handkerchief are mine. Is it a bargain?"

As one in his sleep, dazed and confused, the man automatically drew out from his pocket the two tokens of identification and stretched forth a trembling, uncertain hand toward the packet of bills. Then, when he felt the money within his clasp, he pressed it with sudden vehemence to his breast and sank to the ground, sobbing with hysterical joy.

Bradley dropped the keys and handkerchief into his pocket and slowly replaced the remaining two notes in the envelope. "Come on," he said, turning to Hoskins, "we must go. We'll leave you a sack of grub and a flask over at the well," he continued, addressing the man who still sat upon the ground, gazing now as an enraptured child upon the wealth clutched within his hands.

"God bless you, friend," he said, suddenly looking up and extending his hand. "God bless you!"

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"Good-bye and good luck to you," returned Bradley, and taking Hoskins by the arm strode off abruptly toward the camp.

Neither man spoke a word until they were mounted and had started on their day's journey. "Of course, this is your affair, Doc," remarked Hoskins without introduction, "but it strikes me you are taking almighty big chances. You only have that fellow's word for it that there's a reward for this Garcia's body, and it's all up with your cash and the buying of old Bailey's claim if he's been giving you a fake story."

"He's got the story straight," answered Bradley. "I happen to have heard of this Garcia case, and I know that the offer of the reward is a bona fide one."

"Well, but even so, what are you going to do about your option? It expires Thursday, and you can't by any possibility get over to San Bernardino and get Garcia's people out here to prove your title to the thousand by that time."

"No, and I don't intend to try," said Bradley; and as he spoke he raised his eyes to one of the far-distant Funeral peaks, towering in sunlit radiance as a torch above the valley, a beacon herald of the coming day. "I'm going to tell you something, Hoskins," he went on, speaking quietly and keeping his gaze fixed upon the illumined mount, "and after that we'll consider the subject closed. That poor fellow back there is mistaken. The grave that he has been watching over is the grave of an Indian. The bones are those of a woman — some old Digger squaw. . . . Tell me, Hoskins, have you ever seen a more glorious sunrise?"

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A Millionaire's Momentous Transaction.*

BY FRED S. BROWN.

IF you can do that, I will make you rich, and, in my estimation, you will become famous." And the speaker was worth $50,000,000.

"I can do it as sure as you are on this ship," was the reply. And this speaker was worth $60.

"There is nothing more certain than that I am on this ship, I am sorry to say. I would give $10,000,000 if I were not.

"There are worse places to be in than on a ship as well found as this one is, even if she hasn't any propeller or other motive power."

"True, but, in my estimation, being out here helpless on the ocean, entirely cut off from communication with interests whose vastness you cannot conceive, is absolutely indescribable torture. It is not dollars and cents alone that is involved. If it were merely money I could stand the strain a thousand times easier."

The liner whose decks the two men who thus conversed were pacing was thirty days overdue. While she was given up for lost by nearly everybody in the several countries interested in her fate, the actual facts were that she had only dropped her propeller and performed the unusual feat of drifting for almost a month without being sighted.

Among the passengers of the crippled liner were a score of men who in the financial world ranked as millionaires, and they were a hundred times as fretful as those of moderate means who were in the same boat.

The enforced idleness made life intolerable to the financiers, and if anybody could have set them ashore in a civilized community, he could have collected about a billion dollars — provided the men of money made good the offers they voiced.

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But the man most anxious to escape from the lolling liner was Mr. Jacob J. Robinson, the impatient individual who declared that he would give $10,000,000 to safely terminate the exasperating voyage.

He said so much about a vastly important transaction in which he was vitally interested that everybody on board the ship at last became so imbued with anxiety as to its outcome that that anxiety amounted to a positive relief to them, because it kept all hands from brooding over their own troubles.

The transaction harped on by the financier had been in negotiation before he had started on a hurried business trip abroad, and, according to his assertion, he had received cable advices as to its progress up to the hour when he set out to return home, but, of course, what had happened in the month he was at sea was a mystery to him.

So he pranced to and fro, daily, looking for a vessel which might be "hired or bought," as he put it, in order that he might be transported to a point where he could gain the keenly coveted information.

Other millionaires on the helpless ship had big transactions pending, but, in comparison with the Robinson affair they shrank into the dimensions of bucket shop deals, as the indications were that it was something that would, or maybe had, turned the financial world wrong end first, or had whirled the governments of several big nations into such a tangle that chaos reigned, or at least a general war was already being waged.

The impatient millionaire gave no details, but always talked in glittering generalities, and no one had the temerity to ask for specific information on such a momentous subject. The other millionaires discussed the question among themselves, and indulged in all kinds of surmises — at many of which they shivered — but the mystery remained impenetrable. Yet, none could doubt that the "transaction" was something awful, and the sympathy awakened at length attained such a depth that a blind pool of fabulous proportions was made up by the money kings to be offered in case it should be needed — provided, always, rescue came.

Mr. Robinson was so sincere and yet so mild-mannered in all he said that his assertions were convincing to the minds of all.

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Even Jack Allbright, the least anxious passenger, who admitted that he was glad he didn't have to pay his board on the prolonged voyage, was convinced that the financier was not crazy.

Jack was about thirty-five years old and was having the time of his life. He didn't care how long the trip lasted. He treated the millionaires as more or less of a joke, or as he might a lot of college chums, paying them no more deference than he would have accorded fellow-members of a club, yet conducting himself toward everybody with independent respect.

Allbright contributed largely to the entertainment of the passengers by devising games and amusements to rob the horrible situation of its frightful tedium. He was popular with the whole ship's company.

One of Jack's diversions was a called meeting of the passengers at which the millionaires were to confess the most reprehensible acts of their lives. Robinson said that the worst thing he ever did, in his estimation, was to devote so much of his time to the accumulation of enormous wealth, that he felt that he stood convicted of selfishness. He had been so engrossed in money-making that he had not even taken the time to get married until within the last year, and then he was sixty years old. Now he was in a situation where all the money on earth could do him no good.

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When the now frantic proprietor of the overwhelming "transaction" said he was willing to give $10,000,000 to stand on solid land, Jack Allbright replied:

"I have a proposition to make, if it would be any relief to you to send a cablegram to your people."

"What! We have no wireless outfit!"

"I understand navigation," went on Jack, "and I have kept myself informed as to the position of this ship ever since she placidly shed her tail-feathers. I know that we are now within eighty miles of a small island on which the new ocean cable which is now being laid is landed by this time. The idea is, you know, to make the island of which I speak a relay station so as to avoid a stretch of 4,000 miles without a break. I am sure that the cable has reached that island since we sailed on this old hooker. No-

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body on board has thought of it, if he knows anything about the subject, and, for reasons of my own, I don't intend to remind any one but you of the fact. I can reach that island, and send a cablegram to any part of the globe."

"If you can do that, I will make you rich, and you will, in my estimation, become famous," the financier repeated. "How can you get to the island?"

"You have apparently forgotten that you have a motor boat on this ship. We can get permission to have your boat put overboard, and I can make the island in four hours. I can steer straight to it by compass."

"If you can, you can help me to make a lot of money," said the victim of the wealth-getting habit. "I will tell you, confidentially, that I have a heavy financial interest in a chain of insurance companies in London. I can send the officials a cipher cablegram telling them to write risks on this ship, its cargo, and the life of every mother's son of us. Doubtless we have been posted as 'lost,' and the public will stampede to get such insurance. The chances are we will be picked up, some day, and the premiums will be enormous in the aggregate. The proposition is not in the nature of a swindle, for there is a chance that we may be lost after all. But that is not the transaction I have in mind. That is something which, in my opinion, overshadows the insurance proposition to such a vast extent that the insurance scheme is, comparatively speaking, inconceivably trivial — insignificant."

"Golly sakes alive!" exclaimed Jack.

"In my estimation the destruction of the world would be a slight affair in comparison with the transaction I have in mind. But didn't you tell me that you were a newspaper man?"

"I did."

"Doesn't your newspaper instinct prompt you to make a big fee by sending a report of the fate of this ship, describing existing conditions thereon, to the leading journals of the world?"

"I have a better scheme than that. I was once discharged by a managing editor for something I didn't do. It was about the only time in my varied career that I was not guilty as charged, and the nasty treatment I received nettled me. Besides that, the person who fired me is about the cheapest of my acquaintance that

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draws a big salary which he doesn't earn. Now, here is my plan: After I have worked off your cablegrams and given them a few days to soak and bear fruit, I will cable the owner of the paper employing my enemy. I will say to that owner that I can furnish his paper with a cracking good, exclusive account of the fate of this vessel, and that I will not send a single word until he forwards proof that he has publicly discharged that pinhead managing editor with a guarantee that he will never be re-employed. My enemy will either be fired or there will be a riot — mayhap a lynching. At any rate, I will get more satisfaction out of the affair than I could out of all the money I ever saw."

So it was arranged that Jack was to have the motor boat set afloat for the ostensible purpose of scouting in search of a sail.

Mr. Robinson carefully wrote his dispatch relative to the grand "transaction" and then prepared his cipher to the insurance people.

Jack Allbright started for the island. He had an anxious afternoon, but found his calculations correct. As he handed the messages to the cable operator, his eyes took in at a glance the words:

"SAY, DOC! IS IT A BOY ?"

And as he read this message, referring to the momentous "transaction," Jack forgot all of his own troubles.

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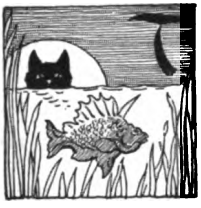
The Hypnotized Ship.*

BY EDWARD TH. CALNON.



THE ink was scarcely dry on his commission as a surgeon in the Portuguese navy when Dr. Jacob Willow was assigned to the cruiser *Castello Branco,* ordered to sail from Lisbon two days later. The night before her departure a small party was sent ashore to gather in a half-dozen seamen who had not returned to the ship. The Doctor joined the expedition through curiosity. On landing, a certain waterside tavern much frequented by seafaring men was visited, and it was here that he first saw Shirzahmeda.

He sat at a table before the tavern door. A flaming link stuck into an iron sconce above the entrance cast a dim and fitful light upon the "Man with Satan's Eyes," as the inn people had dubbed him. He sat on the edge of the chair in a peculiar, crouching attitude with his body huddled upon the table and his face buried in his arms. His hair was long and black. A pair of Turkish trousers showing below his Spanish cloak aroused the Doctor's curiosity to such an extent that he taxed the landlord for an account of his mysterious guest.

The innkeeper averred that he knew nothing, and, indeed, seemed fearful of even naming the bizarre stranger who had camped before his door. But as his questioner persisted, and any hope of present trade had passed with the naval party, which had gone on without the surgeon, he led Dr. Willow into a far corner of the public room of the inn.

"Always he sits like that," whispered the innkeeper with a jerk of his thumb toward the tousled form dimly seen through the open door. "But he is not asleep. Ah, no! He listens. He hears everything. He likes especially the talk of sailors. When men from ships come here to eat and drink he harkens to their every

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word. His form grows stiff and stays that way until the talking stops. He is all ears when they tell of storms and wrecks, of how to guide the ship through mountainous waves and roaring winds, of compasses and wheels, of currents that run in the sea, of icebergs and terrible cold, of parts of the ocean where it is always hot and it blisters the hands to lay them where the sun has shone. But, senhor, best of all he likes to hear them speak of India. You should see him when they tell of Bombay, Calcutta, the Ganges! Then he is not stiff like a statue in bronze. No! No! His body quivers underneath his cloak. He is like a tiger about to spring, but he holds himself in and keeps his place.

"Whence did he come? Where will he go? Why does he stay here?" The keeper of the inn shrugged his shoulders. "He is plotting, scheming, senhor, but what it is that he plots no man knows. Some monstrous mischief, doubtless.

"The devil is in his eyes, senhor, and that is why men fear him. When his eyes blaze full upon them like a lightning flash, men stand like posts, stupefied, or fall upon the ground, and when his gaze meets yours you must do his will. When he is hungry or thirsty he looks up, and if my wife or the maid fall under his sight they must run to him with bread and wine. But, unless he is hungry, he sits as now, with his eyes hid. But some day, when his plot is ripe, what terrible things may happen, senhor!"

As the innkeeper ended he cast toward his awful visitor a sidelong glance in which was a nameless fear.

The hour being late, Dr. Willow left the inn and hastened down the street. He looked back as he turned the first corner and Shirzahmeda was still there, a grotesque form that seemed to expand and contract fantastically as the flame of the link flared up for an instant and then left him in temporary darkness.

Next day the *Castello Branco* sailed westward from Lisbon, and about two months later was steaming eastward from the coast of Brazil, bound for Portugal, with orders to stop at the Azores.

The voyage had been particularly pleasant. All on board were in a jolly mood. The gay spirits of the commander, Capitão Oliveira Corvo, undoubtedly had much to do with the prevailing good humor. This officer, a sunbrowned and handsome man of forty years or thereabout, was overjoyed at the prospect of visiting

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the Azores. It was no secret among the officers that Capitão Corvo was deeply enamored of Portugal's richest heiress, Doña Maria Chagas, daughter of Dom Luis Chagas. The private yacht of the Dom, bearing the Doña Maria, was to arrive at the Azores a few days before he was due there. The Doña Maria was not averse to the Capitão's suit, it was rumored, but her aristocratic father had more ambitious aims for her future.

Affairs were in this delightful but uncertain state when, on a bright August morning, word went round that a ship was coming into view. In a few minutes the cruiser's decks, rails, and lower riggings were crowded with officers and men, all gazing intently at the strangest craft that ever skimmed the sea.

It was a trim little vessel of some fifty tons. Not a sail was set. No smoke curled from her funnel. Nothing moved upon her decks. Her sharp prow cut the waves like a knife. She was headed due south, a course that would bring her across the cruiser's bows.

Suddenly an ensign, with glasses trimmed upon the mysterious craft, was heard to cry: "I know that ship! It is the yacht *Flora da Angra,* of Lisbon!"

The lines about the commander's mouth grew tense and hard. His glasses, too, were leveled at the swiftly moving vessel.

"Yes," he said, in a voice almost like a groan. "It is Dom Luis Chagas' yacht. What evil has befallen her? She is far out of her course, and to be in these waters now she can not have touched at the Azores for even an hour. But look, there are people aboard her! I see them sitting in chairs upon the deck. I see the captain on the bridge. I see sailors standing about. But they are all as motionless as statues, as still as death!"

Indeed, it could be seen with the naked eye that all the Capitão said was true. The two vessels rapidly neared each other. The yacht held to her course and slipped by under the *Castello's* bows not half a cable length away.

As the *Flora da Angra* dashed by a strange silence, as of profound awe, fell upon the other ship. What evil force held the yacht in thrall and cast its spell upon her passengers? Seated in chairs, in groups and singly, about her after-deck, were Dom Luis, his daughter and friends. Not a hand was lifted to greet the war

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vessel — not a head turned to view it. The captain stood upon the bridge, his hands grasping a rail and his face set immovably toward the south. Sailors leaned upon the bulwarks or stood with hands upon the shrouds or companionway railings. It seemed as though a strange reversal of the laws of nature had overtaken the ill-fated craft. The yacht sped swiftly on her way, rising and falling gently on the waves, as though it were a thing of flesh and blood, full of life and strength. The people alone seemed inanimate, standing in their places as dull and lifeless as stones or the dead stumps of blasted trees.

Capitão Corvo was the first to arouse himself. He saw his inamorata being borne swiftly and surely toward the trackless wastes of the South Atlantic.

"They must be stopped," he shouted. "Some monstrous lethargy has fallen upon them. He must awaken them. We must attract their attention."

Thereupon arose a thunderous din. Officers and sailors sent up mighty shouts and waved their arms frantically toward the yacht. Steam whistles rent the air with piercing shrieks. A starboard cannon boomed out a deafening note and a shell ricochetted across the path of the *Flora da Angra.*

A baby's sigh could have accomplished as much as all that hubbub. Those on the yacht whose backs were toward the cruiser never turned or moved. Those who faced it continued to stare with stolid indifference. The lethean sleep which had fallen upon them, if such it were, was a deep and appalling one.

The cruiser's commander saw his beloved snatched from him and hurried by some unseen agency to a lonely and dreadful death. He ordered the ship turned in pursuit of the yacht and began the most curious race in which vessels ever participated.

A hasty consultation of officers was held and it was decided to keep up the chase until the mystery was solved. Capitão Corvo took the responsibility of ignoring his orders to proceed to the Azores. He trusted that the importance of Dom Luis Chagas to his country would outweigh any technical disobedience.

"What is the speed of the *Flora da Angra?*" asked the Capitão of the ensign who had sailed in her.

"She makes her fifteen knots an hour easily," was the reply.

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"And we make our fifteen knots an hour hardly," was the bitter comment of a sub-officer.

The odds were in favor of the yacht, now half a mile ahead, with the cruiser plunging along at top speed in her wake.

By nightfall the *Flora da Angra* was two miles in the lead. She showed no lights but, as there was no indication of any change of course, it was decided to keep up the chase at full speed through the night, trusting to luck and a force of sharp-eyed lookouts not to run down the pleasure craft in the dark.

Before daybreak next morning the war vessel's decks were crowded with seamen. The Capitão paced to and fro, in misery and anxiety. What would the dawn disclose? Had the yacht changed her course during the night and so eluded pursuit? The vision of a sea that reached away on every side, empty, lonely, without a sign of any ship, rose up before him with maddening frequency.

The dawn came. While the waters of the ocean were yet dark and only the sky was gray the cry of "Ship ahoy!" rang out.

"Where away?" called an officer.

"Dead ahead," shouted the lookout.

Dead ahead all eyes were turned and there, one after another, the watchers made out a vessel. It was the *Flora da Angra.* She was about three miles distant, still headed for the south pole, and going at top speed.

Thus the race continued, day after day and night after night. Each evening found the yacht farther away than before.

On the morning of the fourth day consternation reigned on board the cruiser. There were no people on the *Flora da Angra!* Owners, sailors, guests — all had vanished from the places where they had been seen sitting or standing day after day. There had been half a gale during the night and a sea, that caused the yacht to dip and roll, was running. Had the passengers been swept off the deck of the *Flora da Angra* during the storm in the night?

Horrible thought! The distracted naval commander was almost crazed at the mere suggestion of such a catastrophe. But still he hoped, though half convinced that the cause of the craft's

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sinister course was something really diabolical. And then he would swear, both long and loud, with every outlandish oath and direful curse that he had ever heard — in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English — that he would follow that ship to the gates of hell and there engage in a hand-to-hand conflict with Satan himself, if he it were who had stolen his lady-love.

On the fifth and sixth days the yacht was scarcely visible. On the seventh day it was not once seen and the commander's state of mind was dolorous indeed.

Were Dom Luis Chagas and his most lovely, charming and gracious daughter aboard the yacht, or did they lie on coral strands fathoms down under the sea? And if on the *Flora da Angra,* were they alive or dead? And what would be the fate of the yacht? The cruiser was now in the Antarctic. The air was biting cold, and icebergs alarmingly numerous. Would the yacht strike one of these and sink before it could be reached? Would she continue due south, or turn to east or west? Should the pursuer still keep her course or change it? And was it really a ship, or merely a phantom, that it pursued?

Thus Capitão Corvo raved all day while the *Castello Branco* raced toward the southern horizon, over which the yacht had disappeared.

On the eighth day, an hour after sunrise, the *Castello* again caught sight of the *Flora da Angra.* She lay due south, some fifteen miles away. Covered with new fallen snow, she seemed more of an apparition than ever. All in white, her outlines showed the same as on the first day she was sighted. For, strangest of all, her bow no longer pointed south, but east!

Capitão Corvo hastily gave orders to change the course so as to overhaul her. Then the yacht was seen to be turning north — she was coming toward the cruiser, which veered quickly toward the south again, but no sooner had this been done than the yacht headed west. The bewildered Portuguese commander was about to order another change of course when a voice sang out from the foretopmast: "She is going in a circle!"

At once it was seen that this must be so. The yacht was running about in a great ring, several miles across. This explained how her pursuer had been able to come up with her.

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Swiftly the warship drew near its quarry. When but half a mile from the northernmost point of the yacht's circular course the engines were stopped and the *Castello Branco* drifted on the sea, and for two long hours watched the *Flora da Angra* as she dashed the icy spray from her bow and rushed headlong on a path that could lead nowhere. Some in wonder, some in awe, and some in very fear, all gazed in fascination upon that fairy ship. Hull and deck and masts, bowsprit and shrouds and ropes, all gleamed in the dazzling whiteness of snow and rime and frost. And when the sun broke through the clouds the whole yacht sparkled and scintillated as though made of millions of diamonds, pearls, opals and lapis-lazuli.

But the weirdest thing of all was to see this spectral ship gliding through the water with no human being to be seen on board of her. No passengers, no sailors, walked or stood about her decks — no lookout peered ahead for any sign of danger.

And as they gazed, on a sudden it seemed as though her speed grew less. Then twenty voices shouted: "She is slowing down!"

It was true. Slower and slower ran the yacht, until her motion was scarcely perceptible. Then she stopped altogether and rocked idly on the waves. "What has happened?" ran the question from one to another in terrified whispers.

"She has run out of coal!" sang out the ensign who had sailed in the yacht.

This material view from one who had walked her decks and climbed her rigging and knew the *Flora da Angra* for a bona-fide structure of timber and iron put heart into all and the unaccountable flight of the yacht lost some of its magic.

So when a long-boat was lowered in charge of a gray-haired naval lieutenant it was quickly filled with sailors, armed to the teeth, all anxious to board the *Flora da Angra* and face and conquer whatever mysterious agency held it in its spell. Dr. Willow went along to care for any sick or injured who might be on the yacht, with very particular instructions from Capitão Corvo to have an eye especially for a rarely beauteous damsel whom he could not mistake, and also for her most estimable parent.

The approach to the *Flora da Angra* was made with little

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noise and much caution, but apparently attracted no attention on board the yacht. The boat came alongside of her amidships and made fast to her without accident.

One by one the boat's crew silently clambered aboard and looked about. All was as still as death. No sign of man was anywhere — no footprints in the snow upon her decks.

Resolutely they dashed to the companionway and into the saloon. The first to enter stopped short in horror. Those behind pushed forward and shoved them farther into the cabin.

For a full minute all stood there, still and breathless, shocked into silence. They were crowded into a narrow aisle, which ran between two rows of human bodies. Side by side, and close together, with faces uncovered, lay men and women, sailors, officers, richly dressed ladies, aristocratic looking men, masters, servants and guests.

But even in the dim light of the saloon, the faces of the prostrate forms did not seem to be those of dead people. A slightly flickering haze appeared to rest on or just above them, casting a pallid light upon those ghastly countenances.

Dr. Willow was the first to move, and strode between the bodies to the form of a beautiful young woman, who had the raven hair and proudly curling lips of a Portuguese belle. It was the commander's beloved.

The surgeon laid one hand upon her cheek, and one upon the forehead of her father, who lay next to her, and then recoiled as though shot.

"There is life in these bodies," he shouted. "Some powerful spell or sleep has been cast upon them."

"Then you can revive them?" asked the lieutenant in a hopeful voice.

"Not until I know the cause," Dr. Willow responded quickly. "We must search the ship."

In the engine-room was found the engineer, carefully oiling and examining the machinery, seeming to wonder why it did not go. He gave no heed, as though unaware of the visitors' presence. In the boiler-room the firemen searched the empty bunkers anxiously for coal. They neither saw nor heard. In the galley was found the ship's cook, almost hidden behind

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towering piles of cakes, pastries and loaves of bread. He was vigorously kneading dough and paid no attention.

The lieutenant and surgeon were leaving the galley when a seaman rushed up with the news that there was an odd-looking man in the wheel-house. The sailor's voice shook with such evident fear that the others were infected. They stepped aside and allowed the Doctor the privilege of leading the way to the pilot-house.

He entered, and gasped in astonishment at what he saw. There, seated upon a high stool, with both hands clasped tightly to spokes of the wheel, was Shirzahmeda.

He did not sit upright on the stool, but leaned far over to the right. In falling into this uncomfortable posture he had pulled the steering wheel over. He must have sat thus a day and a night, during which time the yacht pursued its circular course until the engines stopped.

"This man is Shirzahmeda," Dr. Willow whispered to the seamen. "He is a marvelous hypnotist. He has placed every one of the yacht's company under his influence. We must blindfold him first of all, for, with one glance of his eyes, he would hypnotize us all!"

The surgeon arranged a pea-jacket in the form of a bag and on the instant that he slipped it over the man's head four stout seamen seized his arms and legs. He struggled like a madman until they got him out of the wheel-house and pinned his squirming form face downward on the deck.

There, in a twinkling, he was securely trussed. Bound hands and feet, arms and legs, and with the pea-jacket hood strapped tightly over his eyes, he was lowered into the long-boat.

Attention was then turned to the people of the yacht, the Doctor's own efforts being devoted to reviving Dom Luis and his daughter. A small army of the cruiser's men, acting under his direction, worked over the captain, officers, sailors and guests. At the end of three hours every one had been restored to consciousness and had taken a little nourishment. All were greatly weakened by their long sleep, but were out of danger.

The yacht's people were then transferred to the cruiser. Darkness had fallen, and both ships lay to for the night. At dawn

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a heavy treasure chest was brought from the *Flora da Angra* and the yacht set out under sail, in charge of her own captain, for Buenos Ayres, for coal.

Great was the astonishment of Dom Luis Chagas and his friends when the story of their remarkable voyage and rescue was recounted. The grateful plutocrat, with the politest oaths of aristocratic Portuguese, swore that Capitão Corvo was the most gallant sailor on the sea and must marry his daughter. With this promise of wedding bells soon to ring, and with two such happy lovers on board, every one was in a joyous mood and the voyage almost like a honeymoon.

Much speculation was indulged in concerning the actions and designs of Shirzahmeda. He had seen the treasure chest put on board the yacht in the harbor at Lisbon, it was decided, and had stowed himself away on the vessel, only to appear on deck when well out to sea and hypnotize every one as he met them. He had then attempted to navigate the craft, probably in search of his long-dreamed-of India. What fantasies had surged through that mysterious brain, what visions of empire, power and wealth when he should reach the Orient, may never be known.

At Lisbon Shirzahmeda was imprisoned. Not for long, however. Dr. Willow saw him a month later, standing by the Black Horse statue, as ragged a beggar as any of his fellows. Something had happened in prison — an accident, perhaps — for Shirzahmeda's right eye had been removed. His left optic still flashed in anger and hate, but alone it had no power to frighten or command. He is probably there to this day.

"But why," some one may ask, "why did Shirzahmeda sail the yacht in a circle? Why did he sit there on the stool and allow himself to be taken so easily?"

In glancing about the pilot-house Shirzahmeda caught sight of himself in a mirror. He gazed into his own eyes with a growing fascination. He stared a second too long, however. He had hypnotized himself.

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The Fear Motif.*

BY ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.

CHUZENJI the beautiful is a placid sheet of water enclosed by volcanic mountains, whose slopes are firm and pure in line, like master strokes from a giant brush.

Sumner Boyd had been attracted by the quaint fishing village, whose balconies overhang the lake—the old temple, with its mossy steps and giant gate—the odd little boats, with their naked rowers, and the stately sampans that sailed gravely by. He decided to spend a summer there, lonely though it would undoubtedly be. In the spring he engaged a bungalow fronting the high road, backing toward the water, and bounded to left and right by ample gardens. Here he set up his household gods. He even went to the extreme of bringing up a piano—a tough, weather-proof little upright. It had to be transported by oxen from the railway at Nikko. And great was the amusement of his friends at the venture, greater yet the wonder of servants and town folk when it was unpacked. It was set up in the main room, which opened toward the road. Above it and to right and left Boyd hung three mirrors, reflecting what passed behind him while he played. He had not struck a dozen chords before many auditors gathered, and, as he did not appear to observe them, gave themselves free rein. They evidently thought the performance absurd; they grimaced and laughed, frankly expressing their judgments of the uncouth din.

But whatever they may have felt, the instrument was a comfort to its owner. When Boyd's friends came to console him in his solitude, the little mirrors would reflect emotions far different from the laughter and derision of the Japanese. Often it was an old song or a time-worn hymn he was asked for; then,

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as he played or sang he saw many a look of homesickness—many a smile, half tears, in the betraying mirrors.

One summer afternoon—during the great pilgrimage to Nantai San, Nikko's holy mountain—Boyd sat at his instrument, intently curious over the shifting visions in the mirrors. Past the door and upward led the road upon which trooped the pilgrims, with mushroom hats, white robes, staffs, bare, dusty ankles and sandal-shod feet. They passed in groups and singly—sad and merry, old and young—in endless procession.

Unconsciously he began to play the Pilgrim Chorus from Tannhäuser, though the joyous, happy band outside was far from embodying the grief-worn spirits of Wagner's opera. Though half conscious of the incongruity, even of the absurdity, of the music in this scene, he kept on with the theme, becoming more and more rapt as it developed. The passing figures in the glass dimmed and blurred, and at last, concentrated into a single care-worn face, deep lined by haggard suffering—a face prematurely old, lit with desperate eagerness. A moment more brought the realization that the pathetic vision was no creature of the imagination, but a reflection from the real world of the dusty thoroughfare outside.

A man was sitting on the edge of the veranda, looking in. His was the face reflected in the glass. He did not see the mirror that revealed him; he was, indeed, utterly unconscious of all save the music. His dress was that of the poorest native; but no native would have been affected by that song. Boyd played the Chorus to the end, then drifted off through chord after chord, trying old, familiar melodies. He played "Home, Sweet Home," "Die Wacht am Rhine," "Santa Lucia." The man showed no recognition, but the haunting look of soul starvation in his face deepened to agony.

Under that peasant's dress surely lay a mystery. Boyd became keen to discover it. Could he but touch with his music the hidden chord of feeling, the stranger would reveal himself. The musician experimented — with simple songs, those to which the heart-strings of memory vibrate — but with no success.

At last, made impatient by failure, he turned and made a gesture of invitation, "Won't you come in?"

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Instantly the man flushed, rose and hurried away.

"Maté! maté!" called Boyd. "Stop, stop!"

Half a dozen white-clad pilgrims paused and turned to him with smiling faces. The man skurried on, disappearing at a turn of the road. Boyd was mystified.

The next day brought a similar experience—this time the pilgrim would not venture so near the house. His reflected image could be seen as he sat on the other side of the road, ready for instant flight—intent upon the music, nevertheless, with a pitiful insistency—a look half beseeching, half terrified.

He sat there all the afternoon, while his puzzled entertainer played. But when Boyd rose, the listener vanished.

That was the last seen of him for some days. Then came the beginning of a strange companionship.

As time passed, there grew upon the lonely American at Chuzenji the sensation of being haunted. He never sat down to his piano without the feeling of a presence near him. Sometimes the form of the vanishing pilgrim flitted across the glass. But always when search was made the road and the garden were deserted—there seemed no place for a man to hide.

Gradually Boyd became accustomed to his invisible auditor. At last he came to crave his presence as a stimulus to his playing. There was a weird enchantment in the mysterious proximity of the spirit he could feel answering to every note. One must live through it, as Boyd had, to know that intense yearning for the music of one's own people, the desire that comes when the only music to be had is that of alien instruments—the only songs, the inharmonious carollings of incomplete scales. There was no mistaking the eyes of the man. All the lures that Boyd put forward, however, were of no avail—the Unknown persisted in his unaccountable conduct. The mystery deepened.

October came, and with it return to Yokohama and business interests. "Must" is a cruel mistress. At last goods and chattels were packed and crated, the piano sent coastward—and Boyd slept his last night in the dismantled house. The persistent presence of the shadow filled the bare rooms, seemed to whisper outside the paper shoji with the restless, unhappy question of an uneasy spirit. All next day the traveller was

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possessed by an uncomfortable suspicion that he was followed. At Nikko he felt freer, but no sooner was he settled in the "City Athwart the Beach," than the invisible audience again made its presence known.

At this juncture came Pentanoff, the Hungarian pianist, on his tour around the world, and, having letters of introduction, was everywhere fêted and entertained.

Boyd's musical inclinations and piano brought them much together. The virtuoso was a pale little man, with a shock of fuzzy hair and an impetuous manner. His mother was an English woman, and, besides his mastery of what was literally his "mother tongue," he had inherited from her a certain poise and gentle directness unusual in his hot-headed race.

One night, in Sumner's bungalow, as the two sat over their coffee and cigars, the host told of his weird experience.

"I'm sure he's near us now!" he exclaimed, as he finished the tale. "I am vividly conscious of him, though where he keeps himself is a mystery."

Pentanoff was all interest. "Not German, French, nor English, you say? — nor American, or he would have answered to all three — Scandinavian?"

"I don't think so."

"Russian?"

"No, — I tried the Russian hymn — if anything, that hymn scared him away."

"I wonder — " said Pentanoff, tapping with tuneful finger a minor note — Then rapidly, nervously, slamming the music stool into position, he settled himself, and plunged into the ringing measures of a Polish battle hymn. How he played! Boyd felt an electrifying thrill. He could not keep still, he rose and walked about the room. That tormenting, irresistible music ran riot in his blood. He wanted a forlorn hope to lead — a height to storm — a dash to death with drawn sabre, in some mad charge for liberty!

The hysteria of the passionate song shook him like a great wind. He turned — and came face to face with his Chuzenji Tannhäuser! Great tears coursed down the man's cheeks. He turned to speak — only dry sobs came. Pentanoff heard, and

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whirled around. The musician spoke in a language Boyd did not understand.

The man threw himself on his knees in a passion of weeping. It was some moments before he controlled himself.

Pentanoff received then a merciful inspiration. Turning to the piano, he played gentle, half-savage airs, strange, thrilling songs of the infancy of a people — the simplest, sweetest, saddest in the world. They soothed like an enchantment, the poor creature at his feet. Gradually the scalding tears gave place to gentle sobs of childlike relief, infinitely pitiful — then silence.

Again the musician spoke, his eyes, with gentle test, intent upon the keyboard. The answer came, hesitating, halting.

"Would you mind," Pentanoff said, "leaving us alone?"

Boyd reluctantly left the room and far into the night he heard the hum of voices — then more of the strange eerie music.

Dawn had almost come when Pentanoff rejoined him.

"It's very sad!" he said.

"Tell me," demanded the host after a lengthened silence. "Am I to be 'pied piper' against my will, and not know why?"

"It's very sad!" he repeated. "His whole story is disconnected — a sort of patchwork of memory — and there are hopeless rents in it. He is my countryman. He was a Nihilist." Again Pentanoff lapsed into silence, an odd look in his inscrutable eyes. "An official in his district," he resumed at length, "had become obnoxious to the Association, and was condemned. The Circle, of which your man was a member, was called upon to furnish the murderer. They drew lots, and it fell to him — Fate is such an ironical dame! He was the first violin in the most popular orchestra, and it was decided that the offender might be shot at one of the balls which it was known they would both attend. Unfortunately for the Society, chance had not chosen wisely, the avenger had a gentle soul — he was weak — he couldn't do it. I wish you had heard him describe it. I feel as if I had lived it all myself, or dreamt it in a nightmare. He sat through the evening, his violin trembling in his hand, his revolver lying in his breast. Dance after dance went by, and still he did not shoot. He pictured it to himself, as he pictured it to me — how the man would fall — how that bril-

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liant gathering would rise in screaming disorder — how he would be seized — perhaps not have time to empty another cartridge into his own brain! He saw it over and over again while the lights winked and glared at him, and perspiration hung chill at his temples. He could not kill in cold blood!

"He was ordered to play a solo. He determined that this once — this the last time, he would play — and then — he would make an end of it. He improvised — tearing out from his soul all that terrible day of fear had held for him. He lost trace of everything but his music, and his misery. He paused. The audience he had held spellbound burst into a roar of applause. The host sent him his own glass of wine, the hostess her gold bracelet. He was dazed for a few moments, then the mists cleared — and he saw that his man had gone!

"Vaguely he murmured the name. Some one told him that the official had received a message which called him away. The rest of the evening is a blank. He remembers only stumbling into the outside darkness.

"According to his code of honor he must give himself up to the Society. That meant a disgrace he could not bear — and death! — that he feared with overpowering terror. He went home, secured his little savings, and fled.

"Realizing that his fellow-conspirators would leave nothing undone to find him, and make an example of him as a renegade and coward, he lived panic stricken — hiding, running, starving for days at a time, possessed by a Fear that daily grew upon him. Of course, he overestimated the power of the secret organization — all its members do. But he had been trained in its narrow circle till it made the bounds for his world.

"He does not seem to know how long, or where, he wandered, but after months of anguished flight he reached the sea coast, and concealed himself in a vessel whose destination he did not even guess. She was an English tramp, bound for the China ports, Yokohama her last call, he learned when hunger forced him on deck. He was impressed as stoker. They did not put him off at Calcutta, as they had threatened, but let him work his way to Japan. Even on board the ship he did not feel himself safe from the grasp of the men whose confidence he had be-

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trayed. He lived in apprehension. His mind was already in the clutch of the fixed idea — the monomania of the hunted.

"When he reached the farthest East, he was terrified at prospect of the return voyage. He thought of embarking for America, and had almost completed arrangements for that, when he imagined he recognized a face in the crowd — fancied he saw a hand make the signal of his Society! Mad with fear, he fled, wandering and begging — ever making for remoter regions. Reaching the mountains, he buried himself in a little village of charcoal burners.

"There he lived ten years, perhaps longer. He picked up the language and gradually became identified with the people, who accepted him at first with curiosity, at last with friendship, ever with uniform gentleness.

"The Fear was with him always, though its cause had after a time vanished from his clouded mind. Only one longing, one need, remained clear and persistent — music! He strung a samisen to a European scale, and worked with the koto, but their tinklings were a poor solace.

"In his restlessness he began journeying, following pilgrimages from place to place, till he happened to fall in with the Nantai San procession. Suddenly — you can imagine what it must have been to him — out of the blur of white road and dusty, blue shadows, came the long lost tones — the melodies for which his heart hungered. He was drawn to them as by a spell. Memories sprang to life! faint and indistinct at first, dim visions of another existence. He followed the sounds till he came to your veranda, and sat there looking in at the strange, yet familiar instrument. Slowly he drank in harmonies, long forgotten, long sought for. When at last you rose and spoke to him, the old terror smote his heart, and he fled.

"But the music drew him back. He would often crouch under the little porch, listening with all his soul. In those long summer months his mind was born again — but the dread remained. When you went away, he followed you.

"To-night — but you know the rest — the final awakening came. He was exhausted. I played him to sleep at last. He's in there now, poor wretch! Think of it — what a life!"

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The two men sat silent. For the moment they entered that strange existence of fear and longing — understood the unutterable effort of that numbed brain working through a labyrinth of darkness, guided only by the slender thread of sound — leading slowly out into the light!

Pentanoff rose. "I'll come back in the morning," he said, "to talk over what we had best do. Leave the poor devil where he is; let him alone — I've made him comfortable, and he'll sleep for twenty-four hours at least."

Bidding his friend good-night, Boyd went to his room and to bed, falling into a heavy doze, from which he suddenly awoke. He was sitting bolt upright in his bed, startled. He was sure he had heard some strange noise. It came again — three great chords on the piano! The suddenness of the awakening had confused him. For some moments he was at a loss to account for the sounds in the room beneath. His feet slipped to the floor — then a rush of music held him still and silent.

What was it? — this overwhelming uprising of sound? Terror, terror, abject terror! in every note. Then fragments of longing, yearning — reminiscent melodies — and again Fear, smiting, all-benumbing Fear!

Boyd swayed back and forth, blinded with tears. Again and again he tried to rise, but sank down trembling.

A crash — a discord, that seemed to break the very heart of the instrument — then silence, through which the last chord hummed in a roaring circle of sound.

Snatching his dressing-gown, Boyd ran to the sitting-room. The swinging lamp that hung from the ceiling was turned low, and threw distorted, gigantic shadows as it swung slightly to and fro in the draught of the opened door. The room at first glance seemed empty — but across the keyboard of the piano, lay huddled a limp shape — one arm hanging idly, the other bent under the drooping head.

Slowly the body lost balance; sinking, collapsing to the floor. The thread in the labyrinth was broken!

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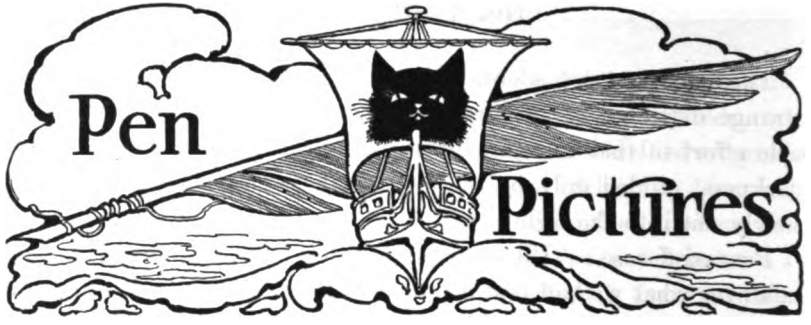

The Weirdest Land on Earth.*

No. III.

The Gathering of the Golden Fleece.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

For nine months of the year Nature runs a continuous gray film before the eyes of the Australian bush dwellers, and their brains rust under the appalling loneliness.

Then comes the awakening. One morning the news flashes over the continent that the early sheds have started to shear, and a thrill goes through the land. The Outback awakes. The sheep raiser almost forgets the crow and the rabbit, and views his lot cheerfully. The overland tracks echo to the hoofs of the shearer's hack and the accompanying pack horse. The dust-covered Sundowner, with billy-can, flour-bag and swag, trudges forward hopefully. The news spreads over the land like an inspiriting battle cry. It is wool time. It is harvest time. The Golden Fleece is falling, and the good days have begun. More than one-fourth of all the sheep on the globe are to be shorn and a wool crop valued at more than one hundred million dollars is to be harvested. The whole world is interested in this crop, because the whole world is the purchaser.

The mill hand in England, who is working half time through lack of raw material, is praying for the arrival of the fleeces that the army of suntanned shearers is stripping from the blocks on the Darling Downs twelve thousand miles away. A fresh supply of wool means six days work a week and food for his

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starving family. French and German mill owners curse the slow tramp steamers whose blunt-nosed bows plough leisurely northwards with the first shipments from the early sales. Wool means wealth to them.

And Australia must sell. She has no mills of her own; she is but the producer of the raw product. True, part of it comes back in cloth and clothing for the wool king and his family, but he does not trouble about that. He is not a political economist. He grows wool and the world wants wool. Therefore, when the hundred million fleeces are offered in the Wool Exchange at Sydney and Melbourne, buyers of all nations are there and shout and scream like maniacs in their endeavors to secure choice lots.

They are wide-awake men, these wool buyers. They have come from the corners of the earth to fill big commissions. When the deep sea cables carry up into the northland the news that the Queensland sheds have started to shear, the Land of the Kangaroo becomes a magnet. It is the signal to the Jasons who have bank-notes to exchange for the Golden Fleece. In England, Germany, France, Austria, Japan, and the United States, men, who blindfolded can tell the different grades of wool by the touch of their sensitive fingers, hurriedly consult the steamship timetables and rush down the long trail to the sunbaked Commonwealth. The wool king wants money. The mill owner wants wool. The mill hand wants work, and the world wants clothing. So into all the manufacturing centres of the old world roll the big bales branded Tangmangaroo, Currabudgerie, Boonoo Boonoolong, Warregarilong, and the thousand and one other places with the musical aboriginal names where the merino flourishes.

The shearing call brings mighty musterings in Australia. The wool army concentrates. Muscular Maorilanders swing up five hundred leagues from New Zealand; Tasmania sends her battalions; the Riverina "ringers" from the Murray and Murrumbidger with record tallies as knights of the shears, move to the scene of activity, and mounted Snowy River veterans from the south, who, as Rough Riders, have no peers on the face of the globe, again meet men from the Gulf of Carpentaria that

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they have not heard of since last shearing.

"And the Snowy River riders on those hills have made their home,
Where the river runs the giant cliffs between;
I have seen full many a rider since I first began to roam,
But never yet such riders have I seen."

From the shearing sheds ascends a sweet song of toil. The weird silence is broken. The homesteads are camping grounds for happy armies. The cracking of whips, the shouting of men, the barking of dogs, and the baa-ing of the penned thousands that await their turn, goes up in a chant that thrills. It is the song the woolman's brain associates with cash and comfort, with the yearly trip to the glittering city, with a flutter at Randwick or Flemington race tracks — it is the Song of Wool. He has waited for it, longed for it, prayed for it. When the attacks of drought and fire, crow and rabbit, have seemed unendurable, it has proved the blessed memory that nerved him to fresh efforts. When the sun has peered like a bleary eye through the smoke pall of the advancing bush fires, he recalled the click of the shears, the strumming of the banjos in the twilight, the songs of Warrego Jack and Saltbush Bill, and he fought on. Memories play a big part in the doing of brave deeds.

The Australian shearer is a working man apart. America possesses no class with which he may be compared. He is the most independent worker in the world. He shears at a price fixed by his Union. His sheds are booked ahead. The sheep-breeder must answer to the Union for any unfair treatment. He does not take kindly to orders. He considers himself the equal of the wool king. He receives his check as each shed finishes, or "cuts out" in plain Australianese, and he thinks the compliment is on the side of his employer.

The Australian Shearers' Union is one of the most powerful labor organizations in the world. It controls its own newspaper. It has the support of the Parliamentary Labor Party in both State and Federal Parliaments. By its influence shearers have time and again been elected as representatives of the people. It is a thorn in the side of the pastoralists.

The shearers as a body are a class that any country might be proud of. They are sunburnt, sinewy men whose capacity for

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work is tremendous. A man shears from one hundred to two hundred and fifty sheep a day according to the heaviness of the fleece. But two hundred and fifty is not high-water mark. "Ringers," as the record men are called, have carried the day's score to over three hundred, a feat that seems impossible when one considers that each sheep must pass the eye of the "boss of the board." It is only on the smaller sheep runs that the old-fashioned hand shears are now used. In all the large sheds these have been replaced by the shearing machine operated by compressed air, by means of which a shearer can double the records made with the old-fashioned blade. Forty, sixty and eighty shearers working in one shed is no uncommon sight. The wool rolls back like foam before the machine and the sheep has hardly recovered from his astonishment at being roughly seized and thrown, before he is put aside, looking woefully thin and scrawny after the operation. They are workers, these men. With a thermometer over the hundred mark, and stripped to trousers and singlet, they rip the fleeces from the "jumbucks" with lightning rapidity. Each strives for the honor of being the "ringer" of the shed, but the boss has a quick eye for slummed work. They never straighten their backs till the whistle blows, and all day long the white fleeces roll away from the blade — the white fleeces that the mill hand twelve thousand miles away is anxiously praying for.

The "pickers up" and roustabouts bundle the wool into huge sacks that are compressed and branded and loaded on the waiting teams that swing towards the nearest railway station, perhaps twenty, thirty or even fifty miles away. The teamsters must hurry. The world wants wool.

"With lash and lurid order,
They will swing across the Border,
The dust upon the lading making extra weight to pull,
And the drunken township loafer,
Staggers blindly from the sofa,
Just to cheer the first team over with the Thurulgoona wool."

It is a perfect cyclone of energy that sweeps over the continent. The buyers are waiting. The tramp steamers are rocking in the waters of Port Jackson and Port Philip, anxious for their cargoes. The army of shearers, with cooks, "pickers up"

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and roustabouts in its train, sweeps through the land, leaving millions of shorn sheep in its wake. There is no idling. The world wants wool. The country correspondents telegraph the news that they have "cut out" at Burrawadgerie, Currendooley, Jembaicumbene, Illililiwa, and all the great sheep runs that dot the outback territory, and before the city man is aware of the tremendous work going on in the interior, one hundred million sheep have been stripped of their coats.

Then the army disperses. The bush roads are deserted. The stillness reigns again over the lonely homesteads. The crow notes the leanness of the shorn sheep and wonders. The Sundowner walks wearily. The Sundowner, that typical character of the Australian bush, who has earned his title by the regularity with which he times his arrival at each homestead so that he can beg an evening meal and the use of the travelers' hut. The wool king takes a flying trip to town and then returns to face another year of bitter hardship.

But up in Europe they are busy. The mill hand is happy, and praying as he works that the sheep on the Darling Downs will grow record fleeces for the next year. He is working full time, and his children are well fed.

NOTE: The fourth Pen Picture of The Weirdest Land on Earth will appear in THE BLACK CAT for May. It will deal with the dwellers of the grim interior.

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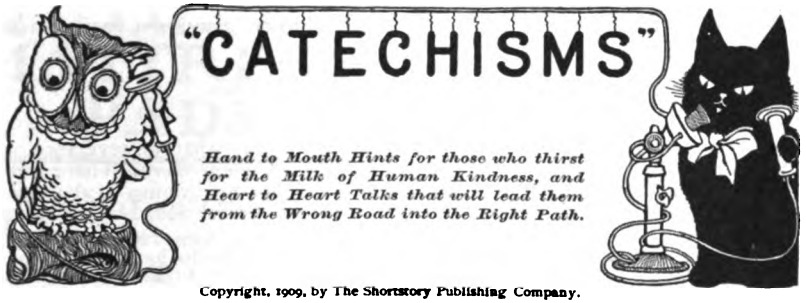

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Will you suggest a little story illustrating the reward of perseverance that you think will interest my Sabbath School class? — ANNABELLE.

Once upon a time two frogs, in search of richer feeding ground, jumped into a bucket of cream they found standing in a brook.

"May as well give up," wailed one, after floundering about, vainly trying to get out, "We're goners!"

"Keep on paddling," counselled the other, "And we'll get there!"

"No use," came from number one, "too thick to swim, too thin to jump, too slippery to crawl; bound to die anyway, may as well die to-night." And he sank to the bottom and kicked the bucket.

His companion doggedly kept on paddling, paddling, paddling. The next morning found him perched on a mass of butter, eagerly disposing of the flies that came swarming from all directions. He got there!

I am a Divinity Student and intend to spend my vacation at the home of my betrothed, at Hell's Half Acre, Maine. I am afraid I shall be asked to preach at the local church, and as I have not yet reached the point where I can prepare my own sermons, would you kindly suggest a suitable one? — OBADIAH.

We are sure that the story of Mother Hubbard as told in the following sermon will go straight to the hearts of your listeners.

"Brethren, the words of my text are:

> "'Old Mother Hubbard, she went to the cupboard,
> To get her poor dog a bone;
> But when she got there, the cupboard was bare,
> And so the poor dog had none.'

"These beautiful words, dear friends, carry with them a solemn lesson. I propose this evening to analyze their meaning, and to attempt to apply it, lofty as it may be, to our every-day life.

"Mother Hubbard, you see, was old; there being no mention of others, we may presume she was alone; a widow — a friendless, old, solitary widow. Yet did she despair? Did she sit down and weep, or read a novel, or wring her hands? No! *she went to the cupboard.* And here observe that she *went* to the cupboard. She did not hop, or skip, or run, or jump, or use any other peripatetic artifice she solely and merely *went* to the cupboard.

"We have seen that she was old and lonely, and we now further see that she was poor. For, mark, the words are '*the* cupboard,' not 'one of the cupboards,' or the 'right-hand cupboard,' or the 'left-hand cupboard,' or the one above, or the one below, or the one under the stair, but just *the* cupboard,— the one little humble cupboard the poor widow possessed. And why did she go to the cupboard? Was it to bring forth golden goblets, or glittering precious stones, or costly apparel, or feasts, or any other attributes of wealth? *It was to get her poor dog a bone!* Not only was the widow poor, but her dog, the sole prop of her age, was poor too. We can imagine the scene: the poor dog crouching in the corner, looking wistfully at the solitary cupboard, and the widow going to that cupboard — in hope, in expectation may

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be, to open it, although we are not distinctly told that it was not half open or ajar — to open it for the dog.

"'But when she got there, the cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.'

"'When she got there!' You see, dear brethren, what perseverance is. You see the beauty of persisting in doing right. *She got there.* There were no turnings and twistings, no slippings and slidings, no leaning to the right or falterings to the left. With glorious simplicity we are told *she got there.*

"And how was her noble effort rewarded?

"'The cupboard was bare!' It was bare. There were to be found neither oranges, nor cheesecakes, nor penny buns, nor gingerbread, nor crackers, nor nuts, nor lucifer matches. The cupboard was bare! There was but one, only one, solitary cupboard in the whole of that cottage, and that one, the sole hope of the widow and the glorious load-star of the poor dog, was bare! Had there been a leg of mutton, a loin of lamb, a fillet of veal, even a box of Lowney's chocolates or a cake of Sapolio, the case would have been different, the incident would have been otherwise; but it was bare, my brethren, bare as a bald head, bare as an infant born without a caul!

"Many of you will probably say, with all the pride of wordly sophistry, 'the widow, no doubt, went out and bought a dog biscuit.' Ah, no! Far removed from these earthly ideas, these mundane desires, poor Mother Hubbard, the widow, whom many thoughtless worldlings would despise, in that she only owned one cupboard, perceived — or I might even say saw — at once the relentless logic of the situation, and yielded to it with all the heroism of that nature which had enabled her without deviation to reach the barren cupboard. She did not attempt, like the stiff-necked scoffers of this generation, to war against the inevitable; she did not try, like the so-called men of science, to explain what she did not understand. She did nothing. The poor dog had none! And then at this point our information ceases. But do we not know sufficient? Are we not cognizant of enough?

"Would we dare to pierce the veil that shrouds the ulterior fate of Old Mother Hubbard, the poor dog, the cupboard, or the bone that was not there? Must we imagine her still standing at the open cupboard door, or depict to ourselves the dog still dropping his disappointed tail upon the floor — the sought-for bone still remaining somewhere else? Ah no, my dear brethren! we are not so permitted to attempt to read the future. Suffice it for us to glean from this beautiful story its many lessons; suffice it for us to apply them, to study them as far as in us lies, and, bearing in mind the natural frailty of our nature, to avoid being widows; to shun the patronymic of Hubbard; to have, if our means afford it, more than one cupboard in the house, and to keep stores in them all. And oh! dear friends, keeping in recollection what we have learned this day, let us avoid keeping dogs that are fond of bones. But, brethren, if we do — if fate has ordained that we should do any of these things—let us then go, as Mother Hubbard did, straight, without curveting or prancing, to our cupboard, empty though it be— let us, like her, accept the inevitable with calm steadfastness; and should we, like her, ever be left with a hungry dog and an empty cupboard, may future chroniclers be able to write also of us, in the beautiful words of our text—

"'And so the poor dog had none.'"

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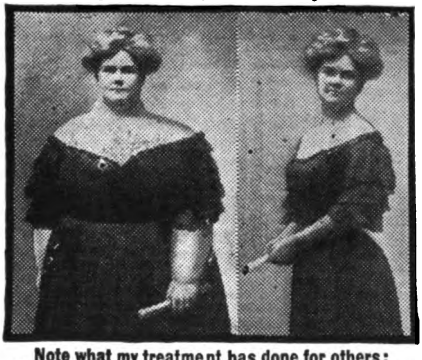

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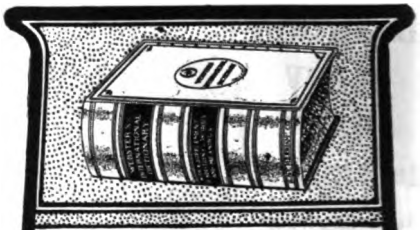

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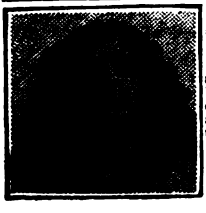

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How We Obtained These Secrets

Michael K. Boyer, our poultry editor, has had exceptional opportunities and the closest friendship with poultrymen all over the country. They have freely told him many of their most jealously treasured secrets, many others we have bought, and this scattered material, together with several of Mr. Boyer's own valued methods, has now been collected in book form. It must be clearly understood that every secret printed has been obtained in an honorable way.

Dr. Woods' Egg Food Secret

Dr. P. T. Woods authorizes the publication of his system for producing large quantities of sterile eggs for market. Every poultryman who raises eggs for market must know Dr. Woods' method to be up with the times and every householder who supplies only his or her own table will appreciate an increased quantity of the highest quality eggs for table use.

Secret of Fertile Eggs

Boyer's secret of securing fertile eggs by alternating males we believe is worth $100 to any big producer of eggs for hatching, either for his own incubators or selling to others for fancy stock. It is something new, and the diagrammatic illustration furnished by Mr. Boyer makes the matter so plain that the novice can easily understand it. This system is already practiced or about to be introduced in many of the largest poultry plants in the country.

I. K. Felch's Mating Secret

Many years ago Mr. Felch, one of the best known figures in the poultry world, published his breeding chart, but later, realizing its great importance and value to him, he withdrew it and kept the information for himself. He has now given Mr. Boyer permission to use this system and it is included in this book.

Secret of Feed at 15c a Bushel

An enterprising poultryman has been advertising this secret for $5.00 and pledging those who buy it not to disclose it to any one else; it has, however, long been known to a few poultrymen, Mr. Boyer among them, and the method is fully explained in "Poultry Secrets."

So-Called "Systems" Explained

A number of "systems" and secret recipes have been and still are sold at high prices. Some are good, but not new; some are new but of little value. Some are worth the money paid for them. "Poultry Secrets" gives the facts.

Selecting the Laying Hens

Since the production of eggs is the very basis of the poultry industry, the ability to tell the laying hens in the flock quickly, without the aid of trap nests, will put dollars in your pocket. Do not keep on feeding the robber hens.

Of course we cannot go to the length of saying that all the information in the book is new to everyone. It is said there is nothing new under the sun, and the Egyptians were hatching eggs by artificial heat centuries ago; but we do say that to the great majority of poultrymen these secrets are unknown.

Poultry Department of Farm Journal

Farm Journal for thirty years has conducted a poultry department known the country over for the ability of its editors and the value of its contents. Besides this strong section, which of itself makes the paper valuable to every chicken owner, its other departments are ably conducted and widely quoted. It is the standard farm and home paper of the country, with already more than three million readers. It is clean, bright, intensely practical; boiled down; cream, not skim-milk. Its editors and contributors know what they are talking about, and quit when they have said it. It is for the gardener, fruit man, stockman, trucker, farmer, villager, suburbanite, the women folks, the boys and girls. It is illustrated and well printed on good paper. It has not a medical or trashy advertisement in it. Its more than half million subscribers pay five and ten years ahead — a very remarkable fact.

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12. Woods' secret of saving weak incubator chicks.
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19. An exposure of the methods employed by some fanciers to kill the fertility of hatching eggs.

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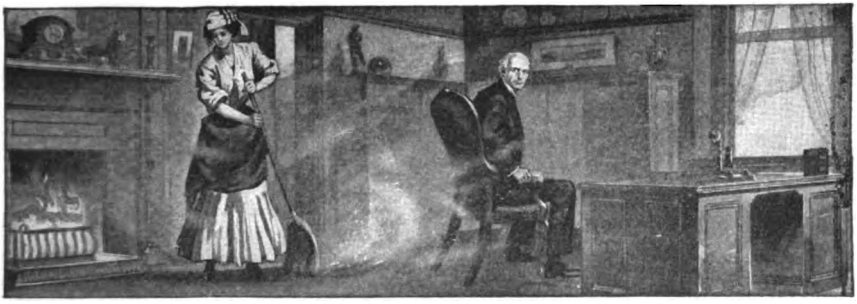

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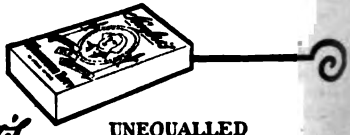

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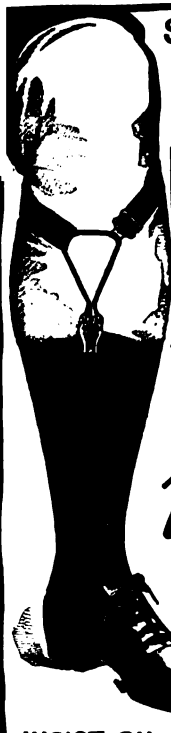

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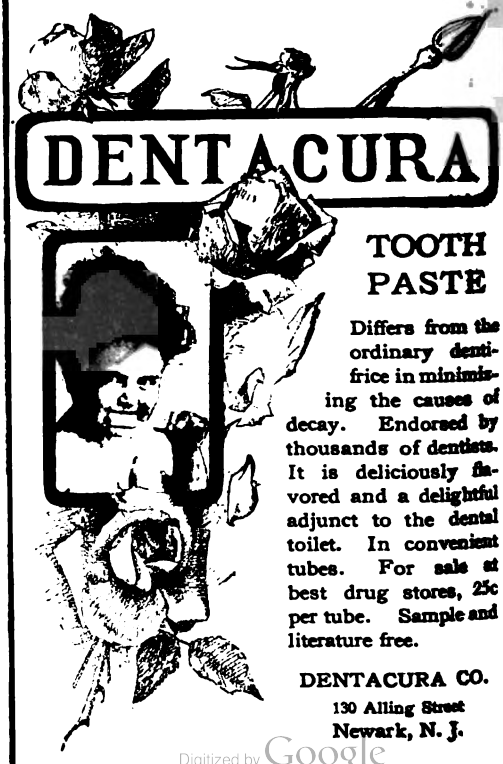

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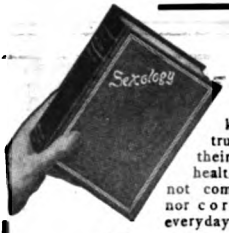

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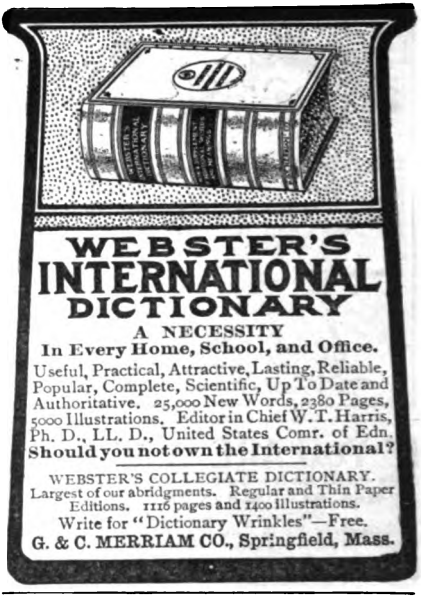

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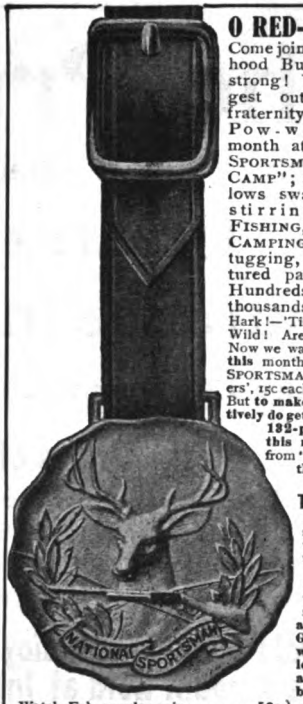

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The King's Physician.*

BY ALBERT F. BONNEY.

"WAS a prophet, was I not?" The speaker rattled his keys, to hide the smile in his beard. The other man shrugged his shoulders, and then threw himself down on the stone bench by the stone table.

"I have often taken worse hurts in sport, my friend," he growled over the edge of his cup, "so do not let my stripes worry you." He filled a cup, which he shoved to his companion. "Sit down and talk with me," he said, and then drank of his wine in great gulps, while the jailer took sups, looking regretfully the while at the two hundred pounds of brazen fetters which burdened the man's wrists and legs and would have dissipated any doubts which might have existed regarding his status in society, for not only was he a prisoner, but there remained now only a brief time longer for him to live. The jailer nodded as he wiped the dripping red wine from his beard.

"Well, I warned you of this yesterday when I told you of the King's sickness. You — "

"May the Devil burn him," growled the prisoner.

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"Nay, nay, not so," argued the jailer, "for he is a good King; a little too fond of wine, women and the table, perhaps, yet he is generous and just."

"Too just to suit me," replied the prisoner with a grim smile. The jailer grinned.

"'The thief who feels the bowstring draw, has little loving for the law,'" he quoted. "Did you not plead guilty?" he asked.

"Hoping for a sentence to the galleys," was the muttered reply, and his keeper understood.

"'Tis not my fault that you erred," laughed the jailer, "for, as I said, I warned you that he might have you flogged from his presence, yet, because he had decreed that any one might come before him in the matter, nothing would do but that I take you to him, and now —"

"Tell me more about this curious illness of the King," interrupted the prisoner.

"Curious illness?" cried the jailer, "Who said it was curious? not I, I'll be sworn. There is nothing uncommon about it. The King is overfond of wine, women and the table, as I said, and that tells the whole story, and now that the wine turns to vinegar in his stomach, and he cannot relish his food, he is a sick man, and the captain of the guard told me, that his wife told him, that the head witch who guards his seven and twenty wives told her that —" he leaned and whispered. "You know what it means to have a woman in your hair. It matters not that one may strangle them, or set them adrift, or drop them into the ocean done up in a sack, it would not stop complaint so long as one was left alive."

The prisoner nodded gravely. "I know." His voice was hushed.

"And there you have the whole tale," continued the jailer. "Just half a cup," as the other offered to refill his measure. "But why this sudden curiosity, my friend?" stopping his cup at his lips to ask the question.

"Oh, just the matter of curing him. Do you think that I may see him again?"

"Of course you may," declared the jailer. "Ah, I wish I

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had a leech's skill," he cried. "Think of the advancement, the wealth, and the power — m-m-m-m," he mumbled in his wine, looking at the other with burning eyes.

"Well, while this matter of mine is of great importance to me," said the prisoner," it may prove of no small moment to you, for if it works out as I plan, I shall be in a position to aid you to better things than chatting and drinking with men who have nothing left to do but await the ax. Now, tell me, is it not also true that it is the law that a prisoner condemned to death may appear before the King each of seven days before the one set for his execution, to make any demand that he desires?"

"It is even so," declared the guardian of condemned men, "because that once in the time of this King's grandfather, an innocent man went to the block because he could not see the King and prove his innocence. Yet you do not wish to plead guiltlessness?" he grinned.

"I want my rights," was the defiant reply, "and this makes it more certain that I shall see the King. Say," suddenly dropping his cup hand to his knee, "did you see the young woman who stood behind the King's right elbow? She was divinely fair, with face and neck the color of a young bull elephant's tusk. Was that the King's daughter?" The jailer dashed his cup to the table.

"By Hell," he roared, "but you are a man after mine own heart — you can think of wine and women while your back bleeds! Yes; that was the King's daughter. Why?"

"I shall cure the King, and then I shall make her my wife," he declared. The cup stopped half way on its journey to the jailer's lips as he stared blankly at his charge for the time that a man may breathe a score of breaths, then he laughed, throatedly at first, then loudly and clearly, until the guard-room echoed with his big-voiced roaring.

"By the Devil's Tail," he yelled, pounding on the table with his cup, "but you are a funny man. You marry the King's —"

"When I have cured the King," finished the prisoner. The jailer began again his deep-toned laughter, but the sound of it gurgled in his throat, to die in a choking strangle as he sprang to his feet.

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"By the Devil's Hoof," he snarled, "the man is as mad as all bedlam," backing to the door, his hand on the hilt of his dagger.

"Come and sit down, man," laughed the prisoner. "Sit down. I am not crazed. Let me fill your cup. Now, smoke, while I unfold my scheme. To-morrow you are to again take me before the King, and when he knows that I can cure him, things will be different. When I was a free bandit chief I never looked for mercy if ever I fell into the hands of the King's men, for I was little given to showing mercy, neither did I devote much time to meditation; since I have been your guest, however, I have had time and to spare for thought, and while things look gloomy for me, I know that this matter will turn out as I plan. All you have to do is to take me before the King, as is my right to demand."

The jailer arose to his feet. "Oh, I'll take you," he growled, "until your back is raw. Well, here is hoping that you may escape the ax." This was ever his toast with the parting cup.

When another day was come, the bandit chief again stood before the king, who looked down on him with a sneer.

"The answer I gave you yesterday did not satisfy you, it appears," he cried. "Well, I'll see if to-day's will. Ho, the guard!" The men-at-arms came hurrying to him. Before he could order them, however, the prisoner held up his hand.

"It is within your power to have me lashed, O King —" his voice was even and low — "yet the time was when we were nearer equal."

"What mean you?" The King's voice was low, although there was dangerous anger in his eyes.

"You do not ask my name," said the prisoner, quietly, a smile on his lips.

"The name of a dog," sneered the King.

"Yet that name is — Wyrick of the Hills," he replied in the same even voice. Clutching the arm of his throne-chair the King sprang half erect, glaring at the man before him, whose eyes went past the King's head and held the beautiful girl at his shoulder.

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"Wyrick of the Hills," muttered the King as he sank back into his seat. After awhile he smiled grimly. "You say truly, Man of the Hills," he said, "we were at one time nearer equal, for you are the only man in my kingdom that ever laid me on my back in a fair struggle. Well," he sighed, his face saddening, "you could do it easier now."

"Yet I would cure you of the ailments which sap your strength and make life a burden to you, my King," said Wyrick gravely.

"Out on you for a fool," snarled the King. "Here," to the guard, "take this man away. He may wish to come again, as is his right. However," looking sternly at the prisoner, "you will not relish your reception another time. Take him away."

"I can cure you, O King," Wyrick replied simply, "and so long as you leave me strength to walk shall I appear before you to make my appeal," he added, looking into the deep, dark eyes of the girl, who blushed as she drew the mantle over her ivory-white bosom.

Next day his greeting was all that the King had hinted, and on the day following when he again made his way to make his appeal to his sovereign his back still ached. The King smiled when he saw him standing as erect and fearless as at first. Without waiting for the monarch to address him, Wyrick spoke:

"A man who has but two days to live has but little fear of the lash, O King, and I am come to tell you that to-morrow, when the sun is still three hours high, I shall come for the last time to make my demand, for on that day, when the sun goes down, my life goes with it, unless you interfere." He looked at the girl. "For next to the last time, O King, I can cure you." The girl's eyes held a strange light.

"Take him away," cried the King sharply. "He shall surely die when to-morrow's sun goes down, as he says,—so let his comfort be your first care. It is a waste of time to scourge a man who laughs as you flail him."

Now the sun is but an hour high on the last day that Wyrick of the Hills has to live, and his jailer touches cups with him,

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"By the Devil's Horn, man," he cried, "it grieves my heart to see the shadows grow long, for when they cease —" he stopped to sink his nose in his drink, then drew his hairy arm across his lips. "Yet we must all go over that road, some day," he went on, "and what matters when, or how?"

"Aye, what matter?" laughed the other, then threw up his head defiantly. "However, I have not yet traveled it, nor shall I." His voice was a growl.

"You have a reason for your hope, I opine?" asked the jailer, a smile moving his beard.

"That I have," declared the prisoner.

"May I ask what it is?" queried the guard. Wyrick drew himself up proudly, and said:

"Each time that I talked with the King, his daughter —"

"Now by the Devil's Tail, comrade," snorted the jailer, "you are building your house on dry sand, to found hope on a woman. Oh, yes," he cried, when Wyrick would have spoken, "but I know women, and the time was when I, too, trusted one when she smiled. It is said that a man can 'smile, and smile, and be a villain,' while I have found that a woman can smile, and smile, and be unwilling. What did the baggage do to me? Cast me off for a cross-eyed son of sin because, forsooth, he could play on the lute, and wore velvet. Then I went and bought me a wife in the open market, and, well, a woman is a woman. I —" the sound of a bell crashed into the conversation, when the jailer sprang to his feet, his swart cheek paling. After a moment's hesitation: "You heard the bell?"

"Aye, that I did," Wyrick replied, stretching his brawny arms while he yawned. "I fancy it calls me to the block." The jailer cursed in his beard.

"The Devil burn you, comrade," he stammered, "have you no fear of man or ax?"

"Fear?" sneered Wyrick, "I never yet have met the fellow, nor do I expect to see him on the short road between here and the block. Well," with another yawn, "I suppose you wait to escort me. Let us go, then, for I am ready."

The masked headsman was awaiting them, leaning on the handle of his ax, and now listened for the fatal signal, which

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soon came, when with a laugh Wyrick knelt, but before laying his neck in the groove he winked at the executioner.

"Your black mask ill becomes you, Rock," he whispered. "How long since you left the free hills to do a king's dirty work? I had thought better of you." The axeman stiffened for a moment, and then growled for the ear of the kneeling man:

"It was a choice between being axed and doing the axing. How would you have chosen, Captain?"

"Oh, the Devil only knows," he laughed. "Well, I am content to go by your hand, old comrade, and when I am gone you will find in my belt some — " he stopped as a great clamor arose.

"Way, way for the King's messenger," came a voice. "Hold your hand, man, in the King's name," as the executioner swung his blade to his shoulder. "Hold your hand, for the King has decreed that this man, who claims that he can cure him of his ills, shall live. Way for the King's messenger!" Thereupon a great shout went up, for the bandit chief was not unknown or unliked by the people, who now surged forward, shouting congratulations, but ahead of all was the big jailer, who fairly embraced the reprieved man.

"What did I tell you?" laughed Wyrick. "I could see the girl's eyes, and I know that I have her to thank for this."

"You would have been thanking the Devil in ten more swings of the pendulum," cried the jailer, "however, wine is good, even if it does come a little late."

Standing once more before the King, the robber chieftain spoke: "That I can cure you of all your ills, I know, O King. However, I must have my own way to do it."

"You shall have your way," assented the King.

"Then," said Wyrick, "bring here the men of law, that they may draw up a contract between you and — "

"Is not my word sufficient?" demanded the King sharply.

"In all matters but this," said Wyrick boldly. "Nevertheless, I must have my way, for kings can change their minds as easily as do women."

"My word must be enough," declared the monarch doggedly.

"Oh, well," retorted Wyrick carelessly, "I go back to the

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block, then. That I can cure you, O King, and make you again the man you were when it took all my strength to lay you on your back I know, still, I must have a contract drawn up by the men of law, signed by you, and sealed with the great seal of state, otherwise — " he turned away, " I go."

The King struggled to his feet, his face flushed with passion.

" You dog! " he screamed. " You fool — " when his daughter hurried in and drew him back to whisper in his ear. Presently the King choked back his rage, and sighed.

" Oh, well, let it be as you say," he muttered, then to an attendant: " Bring in the men of law."

When the document was drawn up — and the making of it took the legal men three whole days — Wyrick folded it, bowed to the King, and said:

" Your majesty will be ready to go with me in an hour." Then, without waiting for a reply he left the royal presence. Two hours later he stood in his old prison, with the King.

" You will await me here," he said to him, and then he led away the guard. Left alone, the King waited until an hour had passed, and then another and then he called. Next day in reporting the matter to Wyrick, the jailer laughed:

" When he called for you, comrade, and I told him that he had traded places with you, he was a man bereft of reason. ' What Devil's folly is this,' he screamed. ' It is no folly, as you will find,' I told him. Then I explained that I had had the compact read to me, and that it was plain enough. That he had traded places with you — that he was to live your life and eat your fare — and that if, at the end of a month, he was not cured you had another month to try, and yet another, until the medics, who could not cure him, should say that you, too, had failed. Then I went away shaking my keys to keep my courage up.

" We watched him, as you ordered, and he paced the room like a wild beast. However, he finally slept, and this morning called me to order breakfast. U-m-m! " He licked his lips. " It made my mouth water! I listened, as you ordered, saying never a word, and when he had finished I took him in the mush, treacle, and water — you know the dish," he laughed.

" Yes, I know it," assented Wyrick absently.

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"'This was the breakfast served to Wyrick of the Hills while he boarded with me,' I told him, but he turned away in disgust."

In another day the jailer came again, an uneasy grin on his face: "By the Horn of the Sacred Bull, comrade," he cried, "but you are a prophet, for when my man took the King his dinner yesterday, he ate like a famished wolf, and finished by throwing the dishes at the fellow's head. So I went to him and informed him that, as he had violated the rules of the prison, he should be obliged to work, when I thought he would die of a fit of rage, and it is now as you ordered — no work, no food — and I am no man if he be not eating with the rest in a day."

So a month passed and again Wyrick sent for the jailer. Filling a crystal cup for the man, he shoved it to him across the table.

"How fares our royal guest?" he asked.

"By the Hoof of the Sacred Bull, comrade, I fancy you are loosing my head on my shoulders, for yesterday when I refused to carry word to you that the King considered himself cured, he swore by all his ancestors that he would have me beheaded so soon as he returned to the throne."

"Fret not, my friend," said the new king, "for the block shall never kiss your neck. Does the King gain in strength?"

"Does he?" the jailer stopped to laugh. "You would scarce know him. In another month — "

"He will be in luck if he gets out in four," interrupted Wyrick, "for there is work to be done while he is away — certain reforms to be brought about, and —" he stopped, averting his face. The jailer looked at him slily, then went away laughing.

At the end of the second month a commission of the court physicians went to the prison and examined the King, and because he could not answer the wise questions they asked him they went away, leaving him to yet another month of toil and coarse food. Yet he was not forgotten in the circle in which he once reigned, for his daughter came to Wyrick, came with flushed face and downcast eyes.

"May it please your majesty," she said, and the sound of her voice was as the song of a bird in his ear, "I would ask of my father, the King." Wyrick looked at her, and when she tried to meet his gaze her eyelids fell as though weighted with lead.

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"I am the King," he said, "therefore am I not your father?" A smile chased the dimples from cheek to chin as she replied:

"You are, as you say, the King, yet how can you be my father?" He took her hand and drew her to him as he said — yet it matters not what he said, rather was it one of the voiceless conversations of love, of which there had been many in the days which were past, and were to be many more in the weeks to come, and when she had listened to him for an hour, her heart talking to his, she went away, when Wyrick smiled. "She asked for the King," he whispered, then he sighed.

To the man in prison the time passed on leaden wings, until four full months had flown. That the royal prisoner was improved in health and strength one of his guards could testify, for in a fit of rage the King had fallen on him, the man escaping only with his life. On account of this outbreak Wyrick went to the prison to investigate, accompanied by a great following of counselors, men of law, doctors and men-at-arms, and when the King saw Wyrick of the Hills, clothed in the royal robes and with his own daughter by his side, his rage knew no bounds. He struggled to speak, yet for a time only inarticulate sounds would come. Finally, he found voice.

"You are the fellow who would cure me of my ills, eh? Well, look at me, am I cured, think you? Oh, you beast! you thief! I'll — I'll break your bones, you dog!"

Wyrick smiled. "Who is the madman?" he asked in simpering tones.

"Who am I?" screamed the prisoner, "Come down and I'll show you. Come if you dare, you thief." Wyrick of the Hills looked at the frenzied man, smiling, then stepped down and cast the robes of state aside. "Strip to the skin," explained the angry king, "and we shall soon see who is fitter to rule, you or I."

Wyrick laughed aloud. "I put you on your back once," he said, "and I opine that ten years of wine, women and feasting has not added to your strength. However, if you think you can take back the fall, here am I." He stepped forward, stripped for the battle.

Ah, but that was a noble contest between two noble men! They strained and twisted, panting for breath, until, by a mighty

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effort, the King lifted Wyrick of the Hills clear of his feet, held him high for an instant, and then dashed him to the ground, where he lay silent and with closed eyes. Presently he gasped and sat up.

"What? How?" he muttered. Then memory came back. He struggled to his knees, took his master's hand, which he kissed, smiling up into his face. "You are cured, O King," he cried, "for by the Devil's Tail, there is not another man in all your kingdom who can put Wyrick of the Hills on his back. Now, about me, does the contract still hold?"

The King drew a deep breath and looked long at his defeated adversary. "Your patron saint, the Devil, only knows what all those limbs of the law put into a contract which could send me to prison and you to my throne! Still, we are now quits. 'Twas thus you cast me on my back, some years ago, and I swore to revenge the fall. We are now quits," lifting the man and twining his arms about him, "and hereafter you are my brother. Let all the people know this," he cried, raising his voice, and the heralds made it known. Wyrick of the Hills grew half a span in stature while the King spoke, and then forgot where he was, and all his surroundings as his eyes wandered to where the girl sat in the royal seat, flushing and dimpling. The King saw the exchange of glances, and a great light broke on his mind. For an instant he frowned, but then his brow cleared, and, slapping Wyrick a mighty blow on the shoulder, he laughed aloud:

"So, by the Devil's Tail," he cried, "that is the way the cat jumps, is it?" Then he looked Wyrick in the face for a full minute. "You have cured me of all my ills, as you said you could," he said, slowly, and again his big-voiced laughter echoed from the rocky walls, while the maiden smiled, even as she blushed rosy red, "yet now you have a worse ailment than ever afflicted me, and tell me, King's Physician, whoever, think you, shall have the skill to cure you?"

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The Honeymoon of the Dragon.*

BY FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.

THE International Limited is always crowded when it leaves Montreal for Chicago, and I was anxious to be able to choose my seat, or at least my seat-mate. I was fifteen minutes ahead of the time-table, but my haste overreached itself.

"The International Limited?" queried the station porter. "Time's just been changed. Not ready for ten minutes."

Then, turning away, he inflated his chest and bellowed:

"Grand Trunk for Burlington, Montpelier and Portland. All points east. All abo-o-ard!"

His voice reverberated in an unintelligible roar from the roof, and the usual stream of harrassed and hurried-looking people began to flow toward the gates. I stepped aside, and then I noticed something coming that was surrounded by an eddy of smiles, and faces turned to look.

First came a red-capped messenger on the broad grin, carrying a brand-new suit-case, and behind him walked the couple that were exciting the interest. The lady, who leaned shyly but affectionately on the man's arm, was dressed in an expensive tailor-made gray traveling costume, with her face and most of her head concealed by a thick spotted veil and a gray hat. But it was her companion who fixed my attention. He wore a frock coat, light gray trousers, a white tie and a silk hat. Some malicious person had pinned a white rosette to his coat-tail, and when he pulled out his handkerchief a shower of rice came with it. His flushed face beamed with joyful embarrassment. I was hardly able to believe my eyes, but it was certainly the face of Arthur Redford.

I recovered from my astonishment in time to grasp him by the

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arm as he passed me. He turned with a start. I was not mistaken.

"Congratulations, Redford!" I exclaimed. "When did it happen? Won't you introduce me?"

"Thanks, old man. No idea you were here!" Redford stammered. "Happened this afternoon. We're off to Old Point for a couple of weeks. I'll see you when we get back to Chicago."

There was no time to say any more; the stream of passengers carried him through the gate and out to the train shed, and I caught a glimpse of a Pullman porter assisting his wife into the train with a great deal of ceremony. It was the last I saw of the pair, but I thought about them a good deal during my way from Montreal to Chicago.

For Arthur Redford was the last man I should have expected to find embarking upon a wedding-journey and especially in so spectacular a fashion. I had known him casually for several years in Chicago, where he had been an advertising agent first and then a traveler for a sporting goods firm. He was clever, audacious, and not overscrupulous. I would not have been much surprised at hearing that he had made a fortune out of a lucky turn in the stock market, or that he had been arrested for forgery — not so much surprised, in fact, as at seeing him married.

However, marriage would probably be a good thing for him, I decided. It would settle him, steady him, provided that Mrs. Redford were the right sort. I resolved to write to him at once and ask where he intended to live.

I did so in the course of the next month, addressing him in care of his sporting goods firm, but I received no answer. Happening to pass the establishment one day I called, and learned that he had left the employ of the firm two months before and nothing was known of him.

I was obliged to do a good deal of business traveling that spring, and in the course of six weeks I made another trip to Montreal, returning through Toronto and Detroit. I was leaving the train at Detroit, having come from Toronto in a day coach, when the Pullman passengers came past me, and among them I noticed a silk hat and a head under it that looked familiar.

It was indeed Redford again, wearing his frock coat and glit-

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tering hat as if he had been wearing them ever since I had seen him last. The lady on his arm was of about the same general height and figure as before, but she wore a brown traveling suit and a heavy brown veil. I noticed grains of rice in the folds of the veil, but Redford did not wear his former beaming countenance. He looked serious, almost stern, and the couple passed me quickly and lost themselves in the crowd before I could speak to them.

But there was no mistake about the man's identity. Evidently Redford had indeed found matrimony a good thing — since he was trying it for the second time within four months! I marveled for some time at the callousness or lightness of a man who could console his widowhood so promptly, and then he passed out of my mind once more.

But he was recalled to it forcibly in less than a month. In a Detroit paper I observed a name that was familiar to me; it was in the column headed "Marriages," and the item ran:

> REDFORD - BROWNE — At the residence of the bride's mother, Detroit, on Monday, by Rev. A. L. Wood, M. A., Alice, second daughter of the late Robert Browne, to Arthur Redford, of Chicago.

At this astonishing bit of news I lost myself in strange suppositions, that all tended toward one dark conclusion. Unless Redford had a double — no, a triple — he must be a bigamist, a murderer, or a Mormon missionary. It was incredible that a man could be widowed and married in the course of nature three times in five months. It was plain, at any rate, that some terrible wrong had been done, or would be done, to Alice Browne, of Detroit, and, with my detective instinct all aflame, I determined to probe the matter of this last marriage at the first opportunity.

Next week I was in Detroit with a couple of hours to spare, and I went straight to the address of Mrs. Robert Browne as given in the Detroit Directory.

From the appearance of the house, the family were well-to-do. I was received by Mrs. Browne herself, to whom I explained that I was a business acquaintance of her new son-in-law, and would like to obtain his present address. She gave it without hesitation. It was that of a hotel in Wisconsin where the couple

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were spending the honeymoon, but she told me that they were expected back in a few days, and that a flat was already rented and furnished for them. Clearly she had no suspicion of anything amiss.

"Mr. Redford was a widower, wasn't he," I ventured.

"Oh, no. He was never married before," Mrs. Browne assured me.

I hastened to apologize, for there was no use in arousing her suspicions at present. I left Detroit that afternoon and went east to Montreal again, where I remained for ten days. Returning, I spent a week in Toronto, and then prepared to take the train for Buffalo for Detroit, where I intended to look up the much-married man at his flat and have these mysteries cleared up. But I was to see him sooner than that.

I was descending the stairway to the trains at the Toronto Union Station, when an old shoe whizzed past me and struck a man below me who was assisting a lady down the steps. He turned angrily, looked back and upwards, and then laughed as he saw me. Apparently he thought I had thrown the shoe, for it was again Arthur Redford.

He seemed to fairly radiate nuptial bliss. His face shone almost like his hat. He was dressed with the same punctiliousness as before, and some one had pinned a white bow to his coat tail. Another white ribbon was attached to the back of the lady's perfectly cut dark-green costume. I could not see through her dark veil, but in a general way she seemed to resemble the other women with whom he had set out on his honeymoons.

I caught his arm and drew him a little aside.

"Do you always go around this way, Redford?" I demanded. "What are you up to? This is the third time I have seen you. There was Montreal and Detroit —"

"I didn't know you saw me at Detroit," he interrupted, looking annoyed. "Of course I remember meeting you at Montreal. But it's all right. I'll explain."

"Where are you going this time?"

"To Buffalo — and then to Saratoga for three weeks."

"I'm going to Buffalo and I'll ride with you."

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The gong clanged, and we had to run for our train.

"Wait for me in the smoker," Redford called. "I'll be there shortly."

He disappeared with his wife into the Pullman, while I went forward to the day coaches. Here I smoked two cigars before Redford appeared, just as I was thinking of going to look him up, for I was determined that he should not evade me this time.

But apparently he had no desire to evade me. He sat down opposite me, lighted a cigarette, and smiled cheerfully at me through the first whiffs of smoke.

"I've left my wife alone for a little while. I'll have to go back before we get to the Customs. Now I suppose you want to know why I have started on three wedding journeys — is it three? — in the last six months."

"I do, indeed," I said, warmly.

"Well, the explanation is simple enough, but queer — too queer not to be true. It's not a very pleasant memory for me, but I suppose I owe you the story. Heaven knows what you may have suspected.

"When you met me in Montreal last winter I had just been married, as you saw, and I was one of the happiest men alive. We were going to Old Point Comfort for the honeymoon, but — well, we never arrived there. Do you remember the wreck of the Southern express last winter? We were in it. I got off with a few bruises, but poor Agnes wasn't so lucky. She had received a heavy blow on the head. I got her to Washington and into a hospital before she recovered consciousness. She remained insensible, in fact, for six days, and then they operated on her skull. It saved her life, I suppose, and I was able to take her home in a month, but she had lost her memory.

"Not all her memory, but only her recollection of the past two or three weeks. Back of that it came on in patches, till she could remember what had happened a year ago as well as ever. She knew me, but she couldn't remember that we were married, and unfortunately her marriage certificate had been destroyed with our baggage in the wreck.

"The end of it was that I had to do a good deal of my court-

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ship afresh, and we were married anew, and to please her we went on another little trip, up into Michigan this time. That must have been when you saw us at Detroit. We had no railway accidents, but when we had been at the hotel for a week Agnes suddenly fell into a fit of unconsciousness that lasted for two days. It was a recurrence of the former trouble, and when the doctors at last got her out of it her memory was gone again — this time worse than before.

"She spent a month in a sanatorium under expert medical care, and seemed much improved. Her recollection was coming back in spots, but she was still dead to all recent events. She remembered me only dimly, and implored me to take her home. Here she improved a little more, but, to satisfy her, we were obliged to go through a third marriage. To be candid, it wasn't a real marriage. It wasn't necessary, and I really hadn't the nerve to get a genuine license and a bona-fide parson and make the necessary explanations. But I hope that I've gone through it for the last time, and I hope, too, that you don't suspect me any more of being a Mormon."

I was heartily ashamed of my unjust suspicions.

"Certainly not," I stammered, and then I heard a voice crying shrilly at the other end of the car:

"Mr. Redford. Telegram for Mr. Redford!"

The train had stopped at a small Canadian station near the frontier, and the messenger had come aboard, waving his yellow envelope above his head.

Redford arrested the man and tore open the despatch. As he read it he frowned and looked startled.

"I've got to go back to Toronto!" he said, quickly, to me. "It's terribly important. I should have known —"

I heard the hiss of the air-brakes. The engine bell clanged.

"I haven't time to get my wife off!" he exclaimed. "Look here — you're going to Buffalo. Will you put her in a carriage and send her to this address?" He thrust a card into my hand. "I'll be along on the next train to-night if I can. Explain it to her. Don't mind if she doesn't talk. She's very shy and ill."

He called the last words over his shoulder as he dashed down

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the aisle. The train was already under way, and moving rather fast. I thrust my head out of the window and saw him jump, stumble and go heels over head on the gravel, and then he disappeared. I hoped that he had landed safely.

With considerable curiosity I went into the Pullman, and had no difficulty in finding Mrs. Redford. She was sitting at the end of the car, with no one near her, and she was looking through her veil at the passing landscape.

"Your husband has been obliged to go back to Toronto, Mrs. Redford," I said to her. "He had no time to tell you — a telegram came on board, and he had to jump. He asked me to see you safely through to Buffalo, and I will be very glad to do so, if you will permit me."

Mrs. Redford bowed slightly, but said nothing. It was rather an ungracious way of receiving my assistance I thought, but I said nothing. I attributed it to her shyness, and sat down opposite her, observing her furtively as the train rolled through the rich fruit farms of the Niagara district.

It was only then that I suddenly remembered, on thinking over Redford's singular tale, that he had given no explanation of his marriage in Detroit, which I had seen chronicled in the newspaper. Presumably he had supposed that I did not know of it.

This fatal omission aroused my suspicions more strongly than ever. I looked at his new wife, hesitating whether to question her. Perhaps I could save her from — I knew not what!

It was growing dark. The car lamps were burning, but she kept her face turned toward the window. I remained in a state of painful hesitation until the engine suddenly whistled shrilly. We were entering the suburbs of Niagara Falls town, and all at once we darted past an electric street lamp not twenty feet from the track.

The sudden white glare penetrated the veil and I saw my companion's features. For a moment I was almost paralyzed with amazement; then I leaned forward to make sure, pulled aside her veil without ceremony and looked into her face.

What I saw was enough. I leaped from my seat and bolted

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down the aisle, boiling with rage and horror, intending to jump instantly from the train.

The vestibule was closed; the doors were locked. I could not get out. I was obliged to stand in the vestibule, full of hot indignation and cold panic, till we reached the station and the brakeman opened the doors.

A United States immigration inspector at once appeared at the steps and hurried on board, followed by a couple of Canadian policemen. They paid no attention to me, after a sharp glance, but crowded past the passengers into the Pullman, and an irresistible curiosity led me to follow, regardless of risk.

They went straight to "Mrs. Redford" at the other end of the car, and the inspector gave a piercing glance under her hat.

"Rice, eh? Very appropriate!" he observed, and snatched away the veil. A coarse black pig-tail fell on the bride's shoulders.

"You lettee me alone!" the unmasked Chinaman vociferated, jumping to his feet and gesticulating violently. "What you do? Me Melican citee-len. Tlavel business. Makee laundley — makee wash — plenty money. Got plenty cash. You no right touchee me. Twenty-thlee to you. You gettee out!"

There was a roar of laughter.

"You gettee out here yourself, Ah Sing," said the inspector, beginning to conduct the Celestial out of the car. I slipped out to the platform before them. I had had a narrow escape from being caught apparently engaged in Redford's business.

"We've got the Chinaman," I heard one of the policemen say as they passed me on the platform. "But it was the white man that we especially wanted. He must have been warned and got off the train somewhere. He's been running Chinks across the line for the last six months."

Redford was never caught. I heard that he had gone to Mexico with his wife — his legal wife from Detroit, whom he had married that spring. At any rate, I believe the Chinese dragon no longer takes his honeymoon along the Canadian frontier.

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For a Day and a Night.*

BY WILLIAM GORDON HASTINGS.

IN front of her looking-glass a woman sat, staring hard at the reflection of her face. It was a woman who rarely looked in a glass at all.

It would seem cruel to catalogue in detail every defect of the face she saw there — she was not, and never had been, beautiful. She had always known it. Ten years before, when she had married a blind man, she had known perfectly well how desperately amusing her friends and acquaintances would be about the event, as they discussed it behind her back. She did not mind — the habitually dull must have their inexpensive holiday of funniness from time to time. And she was much in love with the blind man, and he with her.

She had the body of a very beautiful woman — that made the ugliness of her face more sardonically cruel. Her voice was sweet. Her laugh — she often laughed — was musical. She had told her husband often that she was not beautiful; her truthfulness had made her do that. But her love of him was more than her love of truth, and she was content to leave him quite unconvinced and saying that it was always so — that no woman would own in so many words that she was beautiful, even though she must know it.

There had always been the chance that he would recover his sight. She had pretended to him that she prayed and longed for this. It had been the one horror of her life. One day, perhaps, this man would see her face. He would act beautifully and give no start of horror nor let the expression of his face betray him. He would be very kind and very polite. And he would not love her any more. In a thousand ways, so small that she would be unable to name and describe them, she would know that he did

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not love her any more. Yet it was not quite pretence at times. When she saw how desperately he longed for the sight of the sun again, she found that for his sake she, too, was hoping that he would recover his sight, even though she knew what must happen to her then.

That was all over now. He was away in New York. It had been only a slight operation, and entirely successful. Today he was coming back to her, as one who has escaped from prison, his eyes filled with the joy and beauty of living. She had his letters, full of delightful wonder — the letters that were her death sentence.

She turned from the looking-glass and sat down at the writing-table. All her preparations for this had been made long ago. There lay the miniature which had been painted for her. It was the face of a beautiful woman — not her own face, though its beauty and her ugliness had something in common. There also was a sheet of notepaper, stamped, stamped with the address of a house where they had once lived; they had left it three years before. She had kept that sheet for her purpose. She dated it a little more than three years back, and wrote:

> **Dearest, I have been vain enough to have my miniature painted. It is thought to be very like, though it seems to be far prettier than I am. If I die before you, I want you to have this miniature, even though I fear your dear eyes will never be able to see it. It is to be all entirely for you, and I pray you never to show it to anybody. It is for you alone. You will find it in the drawer of my writing table, together with this letter. You have all my love always. Goodbye, dearest.**

She put the letter into an envelope that had yellowed a little with age, sealed it, and addressed it to her husband, marking it: "To be opened after my death." Then she put the letter and miniature into the drawer and dressed herself to go out. She wore her handsomest gown.

"Take those flowers out of the dining-room," she said to a servant that she passed on her way out. "I am going to get some of the wild anemones from the embankment for the table tonight." She paused for a moment to give some trifling orders as to the preparations for her husband's arrival, and then she started in the direction of the station.

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"Poor dear!" said the servant. "She'll be fully twenty minutes too early."

. . . . . .

The local newspaper gave a harrowing account of the tragic accident which led to the lady's death. She had been picking flowers on the embankment, and was on the rails as the down train swept around the curve. The engineer whistled and applied the brakes, and there was ample time for her to have stepped out of the road. But she seemed to be dazed with terror — stumbled — and fell with her head under the wheels of the engine. She was crushed beyond all hope of facial recognition. The horror of the tragedy, as the newspaper men pointed out in their articles, was that this was the very train which was bringing her husband back to her, he having been absent in New York for an operation, by which he had fully regained his sight. The anemones were found in her hand.

. . . . . .

Years have passed since then, and her husband — an easy, portly man — has not married again. The miniature had more than confirmed what he had always thought, and when her spirit visited him in his dreams it was always with the beautiful and imaginary face of the picture.

And may be that beauty was her birthday gift in the dim land of the hereafter. For though she died by suicide, and her last act was false — the perpetration of a lie — yet it may be that still much is forgiven to them that love much.

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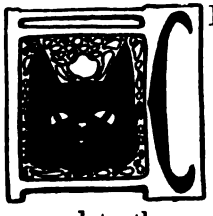
The Clothes and the Man.*

BY MABEL LODER STEARNS.



CLEVERING had gone to take bearings again from the other side of the island. He was so long about it this time that Deane grew uneasy. Now, at last, he appeared over the low ridge of dunes that divided it and came hurriedly forward. He seemed nervous and excited, it seemed to the man in the salt-stained clerical waistcoat.

"Anything in sight?" he asked, hopefully.

"Not a blamed thing! Not a sign of a sail anywhere," returned Clevering bluntly. "It's the very deuce, too, climbing over those dunes. Don't you try it, parson," he added quickly, almost anxiously; "they would put your lame ankle out of business in a minute."

"I wasn't thinking of it, I assure you," Deane answered grimly. "No; Miss Bradshaw and I will have to take your word for it, I guess. You are as much interested as we are."

The girl did not seem to hear. She sat mute and wide-eyed, her hands tightly clasped in her lap, her fascinated gaze fixed on the cruel white line of surf at her feet, creeping nearer and nearer, like a hungry beast stealing upon its prey.

Clevering dropped upon the sand beside her.

"There is no hope of a rescue?" she asked at last.

"None, I am afraid. You see, nothing but a fog would bring a ship near these shoals, and the fog that threw us off our course has lifted."

"How long have we?"

"An hour, possibly; not longer than that. The tide is rising rapidly; when it has reached its height — well, then there will be no island, that is all."

The girl shuddered.

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"It is awful to die like this, without even a chance;" she said piteously, "to feel that God has saved us once from that terrible sea, only to let it strangle us in the end. Why didn't He let us drown with the rest? It would have been more merciful, I think."

"As it is," returned Clevering, softly, "He has given us this hour's reprieve, and I am going to ask you to give it to me, Faith."

"Give it to you? What do you mean?" asked the girl, wonderingly.

"I want you to marry me."

"*Marry* you! Here? Now?" Amazement for the moment swept all other feeling aside.

"Yes. I would like to die knowing that you belong to me."

"But why? I don't understand," the girl said, raising her troubled eyes to the man's tense face. "I don't love you, Mr. Clevering. Why should you want to marry me when — when everything will so soon be over for us both?"

"Because it would mean everything to me, when the end came, to know that you bore my name. I ask nothing more than that," he added quickly. "I will not even kiss you afterward, if you so decree it."

"I should so wish it, certainly," the girl answered decidedly. "But it is not that alone — there is so much in one's last hour to think about, so much to try to understand and be sorry for."

"I appreciate that, and I will not intrude upon your thoughts," Clevering promised, eagerly. "You shall have the hour to yourself — only let me be near you, with the joy of knowing you are my wife."

The girl stirred restlessly in her perplexity and distress. There seemed to her an element of selfishness, almost of cowardice, in the man's persistence — as if he were seeking protection, rather than giving it. Yet she liked Clevering, and had seen much of him during the long voyage across the Pacific.

From the first he had shown his devotion to her, but when he had asked for her love in return, she had gently told him it was impossible. What she had not added was, that the one man in all the world who could have it did not want it.

But that was during the voyage, when life, with all its wonderful possibilities, was still before her. Now, with inevitable death

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staring them in the face, what did it matter? she thought wearily. Had she the right to refuse this man when it meant so much to him? In her overwrought state it seemed to her like denying a last request of the dying.

"It is for such a little while," pleaded Clevering, desperately. "To you it can make no possible difference — to me it is everything. Cannot you grant me this one hour of happiness?"

The girl was silent for a moment, and then, turing a white, exalted face toward him, she said, slowly:

"If — if what you ask is all, then, and it means so much to you, it shall be as you wish."

Clevering caught her hand in his.

"I can die happy now!" he cried rapturously.

Being possessed of neither prayer-book nor memory, apparently, though quite willing to oblige them, Deane performed the ceremony most awkwardly. His twisted ankle prevented his standing, so that Faith and Clevering were forced to kneel uncomfortably on the wet sand. But to Faith's infinite relief it was all over in a few moments.

With a face of triumph Clevering turned toward her.

"My wife!" he said exultantly.

There was a certain hardness in the tone that grated on the girl's sensitive nerves. She would have shrunk from a caress from this man, but the lack of tenderness — of deep feeling — in his voice surprised and repelled her. She had a curious sense of having thrown her sacrifice away, and a strong revulsion of her own feeling swept over her — almost a loathing for the man she had married.

Abruptly she turned from him.

"I should like to be alone for a little while," she said coldly.

"As you please," answered Clevering, readily. "In the meantime I will have another look at the tide."

Seating herself on the sand Faith tried to think, but her brain seemed in a whirl. Why this unaccountable horror for what she had done, and why, Oh, why, did her thoughts persistently turn to the one man whom she longed to forget — the one man who could have had her love, and who had not cared enough even to wish her God-speed on her voyage?

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From the waste of waters before her her eyes turned hopelessly to the little island that had given them such treacherous sanctuary. Her view of the other side of it was cut off by the dunes, but she could hear the ominous beating of the waves on the steeper beach beyond them, and knew that on all sides the pitiless sea was encroaching upon their refuge in an ever narrowing circle.

Near her, staring apathetically before him, sat the little man in black. She wondered dully what his thoughts were, and whether death held any terrors for him now that the teachings of his cloth must be put to the test in himself. Somehow, he seemed almost ludicrously shorn of his priestly dignity without his clerical coat, from which he had freed himself in the water.

She had not known him well on the steamer — a reserved, solitary man, he had mingled but little with the other passengers. Now an impulse came to her to talk to him — to ask his spiritual advice and blessing, perhaps. It was an impulse but short lived, for hers was a nature that invariably solved its own problems.

Idly she slipped her hand into the deep pocket of her raincoat, which she had hastily thrown on over her thin dress at the first warning of disaster on the steamer. It was the first time she had had it on, she remembered, since the day she sailed, when it had rained quite hard. In the pocket her fingers came in contact with something wet and pulpy. Letters!

Like a flash it came to her. Some had been given her just as she was leaving for the steamer, and she had thrust them into this pocket, only to forget them later, in the hurry and confusion of departure. Could one of them have been from ——

Tremblingly she drew them forth. There were several of them, all for the most part illegible from their soaked and blurred condition. But one was better preserved than the others, no doubt from its having been at the very bottom of the deep rubber pocket.

One glance at the handwriting of the address, then, with a wildly beating heart she opened it and read:

> MY DEAREST FAITH:
>
> My mother's sudden illness makes it impossible for me to see you before you sail, but I cannot let you go without telling you how I love you. I have only this hurried moment, but I am hoping the orchids I am sending to the steamer for you will tell you the rest, until I can write again. May God bless and protect you!
>
> JACK.

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For a moment, in the flood of happiness that seemed to envelope her, the girl forgot her marriage — forgot everything but that the one man in all the world loved her! Then a louder, more insistent boom of the waves brought her to herself and a cognizance of the hideous death before her.

And he could now never even know that she loved him! Never ——

Desperately she looked out over the mocking sea, for the first time realizing in all its horror the fate awaiting her.

At that moment there came the sound of men's excited voices, and hurrying feet across the sand. What could it mean!

Dazed, she turned to meet the outstretched hands of — her husband!

"A ship, Faith, a ship!" he cried hoarsely.

She stared at him uncomprehendingly, and then a mad joy tore at her heart. A ship meant that she should see Jack and ——

Again Clevering held out his hands to her.

"My wife!" he said with that same gloating triumph. "My wife, and we are saved!"

His wife! and Jack loved her! God!

Then sea and sky and land became one confused blur, and the next instant the girl was lying senseless at Clevering's feet.

Several hours later, weak and spent from her long swoon and the terrible ordeal through which she had passed, Faith lay back among the pillows of a steamer chair on the deck of the White Peacock. Against the railing near her, lounged Clevering.

Presently the captain of the ship joined them.

"Feeling a little more fit, Miss?" he asked kindly.

The girl nodded, trying to smile.

"I tell you, sir," the captain went on, turning to Clevering, "we were mighty glad to see your answering signal, and know we were not too late."

"*Answering* signal?" queried the girl sharply. "What do you mean?"

"Why, you see, as soon as I could after we were thrown up on the beach, I tied my handkerchief to a stick, as a signal, and left it sticking in the sand in case anything did come in sight," explained Clevering easily.

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"Was that what *you* meant, Captain?" the girl persisted, raising her startled eyes searchingly to the captain's now puzzled face.

"Why, no," he said slowly. "I meant after that, when you *returned* our signal, Mr. Clevering. It must have seemed to you a deuce of a long wait, but as bad luck would have it, the boat sprung a leak when half way to the island, and the boys had to put back for another. It must have been fully an hour before they finally reached you."

An hour! And it could have been scarcely twenty minutes before the actual rescue that Clevering had first asked her to marry him.

"Well, all's well that ends well, and a good night's sleep ought to straighten you all out," added the captain genially, as he passed on.

Even Clevering quailed before the white light of scorn that blazed in the girl's beautiful eyes, as she turned them full upon him.

"So you *knew*, then," she said quietly, in cold, even tones, her slender fingers closing on the arms of her chair until her nails turned blue, "knew when you asked me to marry you, that we would be rescued?"

"And if I did?" Clevering asked, defiantly. "Was I not justified? Surely all is fair in love——"

"Stop!" commanded the girl imperiously. "Don't you presume to use that word to me. Love!—*You!* I never want to see your face again!" she cried passionately.

"That is unfortunate, truly, since we are legally married," returned Clevering coolly. "Come, come, Faith," with an assumption of lightness, "don't make a tragedy of all this! You will think differently of it by and by, and no doubt will be very happy with me. I'm not such a bad sort, after all, even if I did win you by the only available means. Anyway, it can't be helped now, you know, so you must try to make the best of it."

The girl turned from him with loathing.

"I shall never live with you, Mr. Clevering," she said firmly.

Clevering gave a slight shrug.

"Perhaps the law will have something to say about that," he

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answered deliberately. "I have given you no reason to divorce me."

"You mean that the law would force me to live with you?"

"It would recognize my just rights, certainly. You seem to forget that you are my legal wife."

The girl stared at him with frightened eyes. She was very young, very inexperienced and very ignorant of the world.

"I trust, however, that such means will not be necessary," pursued Clevering, virtuously. "I prefer to win you by the strength of my love, not by force; but win you I must, for I cannot live without you."

As he spoke his thoughts dwelt gloatingly on the newspaper clipping that had determined him to take this voyage. It was merely the announcement that after the settlement upon her of her late uncle's enormous estate, Miss Faith Bradshaw would sail on the S. S. Orient, November twelfth, for Japan, where she would join her cousins, Major and Mrs. Arnold Barton, for the winter.

The chances of success had been small, but the stakes had been high, and he had won! The girl and her money were his!

The sound of wheels coming slowly along the deck broke in upon these pleasant reflections. It was Mr. Deane, propelling himself laboriously toward them in an old wheeled chair, his bandaged ankle comfortably supported by the broad foot rest in front.

Clevering muttered an oath. What did the ass want, anyway!

"I am glad of this opportunity to speak to you two together," Deane began a trifle awkwardly; "I have something to tell you."

"What is it?" asked Faith wearily. She wished he would go away — she must think.

"Well, only that you will have to get this marriage business done over again," answered Deane bluntly.

"What do you mean?" demanded Clevering angrily.

"Just that. I am sorry; but you see the clothes don't always make the man, and this is one of the times when they don't. I am no more a preacher than you are! Fact is, I'm a detective, but I sometimes find a parson's makeup as good as any other to shadow a man in — that is, until he goes to the bottom of the

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sea — then I suppose a diver's outfit would have been more to the point.

"Well, when I saw how keen you were on being married on that island back there, I thought it an awful pity not to accommodate you, seeing that we were all going to the bottom inside of an hour, as we thought. You would both die happy, I reasoned, and no harm done — though I can tell you I was up against it when it came to the formula! Now, of course, it is different, and I feel bound to explain things at once."

Then he stared in amazement at Faith Bradshaw's radiant face. Women certainly were the darndest! Any one would suppose now that he had done her a good turn in telling her her marriage wasn't any good.

White to the lips, Clevering glared at him with positive menace. Deane eyed him uneasily.

"I'm no end sorry," he repeated, apologetically, "but I know the preacher on board here — he's the genuine article, you understand — will be glad to fix it up for you."

"Thank you just as much, Mr. Deane," the girl said coolly, "but I think now that I will not be married until I return to San Francisco."

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A Stranger in the Land.*

BY GREIG LAPHAM.

AS William Warner Lemington cut with precision forty-five small, rectangular pieces of cardboard, he neatly wrote a word on each. Then for a few minutes, while he meditated dreamily, he gently shook the bits of cardboard in his hat. At length, he slowly drew forth one of the pieces, and glanced at it. "Michigan!" he exclaimed, a bit ruefully. "A trifle damp and chilly there, I fear, but then — so be it."

An hour later, the young man entered the office of the lawyer who looked after his property, and there was a hint of energy and determination in his bearing which warned the legal adviser that something unprecedented was in the air.

Lemington succinctly made known his wishes. "Sell immediately, even at a sacrifice, all my property, all of it, Blake. I shall want at least two hundred and fifty thousand cash at my command by June first. Invest the balance in such bonds as look good to you."

Blake stared blankly at his client for a moment. "Why, what——" he began.

"Not insanity," Lemington hastily interrupted, with a smile, "merely philanthropy. And say, my dear Blake, I certainly have at last hit upon a novel way of spending money."

In another hour, Lemington was back in his library. In his hand he held a pocket atlas of Michigan. With closed eyes he permitted the booklet to open where it would, and then let the point of his pencil touch the page. After drawing a long breath, he opened his eyes, and read, "Browntown — population 1,023." Next he consulted the map. "A nice location," he thought, and then he cried aloud, "O thrice fortunate Browntown!"

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Browntown, Lemington discovered, was a pretty little village, located on a rather picturesque creek. It did not take long for him to become acquainted with the object of his generous impulse — nor was the town slow to take notice that there was a stranger in its midst. In the course of a year but few strange faces appeared in Browntown, and those were mostly infantile. Occasionally, of course, there came a new minister or a school teacher, to take the place of one who had left for a larger field. Browntown was, in fact, a very agreeable place in which to begin life or to pass peacefully away — but it held out no glittering promises to ambition.

Lemington, as he strolled about that first day, soon found himself attended by an escort of small boys, who gazed in awe upon his splendid toggery; while admiring feminine eyes were fixed upon him from porches and doorways, or discreetly peeped at him through lace curtains, and fully noted the grace and distinction of his carriage.

Yes, indeed, long before Lemington had reached the old McKinney place, the village of Browntown was keenly alive to the fact that a stranger of no small importance was astray within its limits; and that, at the hotel, a zealous Jap servant was guarding well both his master's luggage and his secret — if he had one, and, of course, he had.

When Lemington came to the McKinney property, his eyes brightened. It was exactly to his liking. The great stone house, sadly out of repair, was set with careful accuracy in the middle of a village square. Surely if he were to rebuild the house, have some of the giant evergreens removed, give the grounds over to the magic of landscape gardeners, in short, spend a goodly amount of money, he would have a dwelling place quite in accord with his tastes. He glanced across the street, and caught a glimpse of a most alluring bit of femininity. Yes, then, the neighborhood was all that heart could desire.

Lemington read the sign which hung dejectedly on a tree near the gate:

"This place for sale by Wm. Simmonds."

"Take me to Simmonds," cried Lemington, pressing a dollar into the hand of a dumfounded lad.

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"You really want to buy that place?" gasped Simmonds, when Lemington had made known his intentions.

"I do," affirmed the young man.

"Well, now, I vum!" cried Simmonds. "I never thought to live to see this day. Why, I've advertised that place in our paper for the past twelve years, and every time the ad's read differently. My land! 'twon't seem right at all with that place sold."

"How much did you say?" Lemington broke in.

"I haven't said how much yet, young man," came the response, petulantly. "But I will say it if you will give me time." Then Simmonds lowered his voice to a whisper: "They won't sell for one cent less than five thousand."

"I'll take it, and I want it quick," said Lemington.

The McKinney place had been sold. That was the first of a series of momentous happenings which crowded thick and fast upon the hitherto tranquil Browntown. Of the why and wherefore of the many blessings Browntown could gain no inkling. Mr. Lemington evidently had money galore. Mr. Lemington *said* he was not married. Nothing more did Browntown know about William Warner Lemington.

But his beneficent influence was widely felt. Both of Browntown's churches were recipients of Lemington's generosity. A library was built, a park laid out, the streets improved, the poverty stricken relieved. There was an exodus of the halt, the lame and the blind — some being sent to hospitals, some to a better climate, one to a school. Embryo geniuses were given the wherewithal to pursue their studies, and in the fall a dozen youths and maidens went joyfully off to college. Indeed, Browntown was drenched with a golden shower.

Yet requests from near-by towns for even a drop of Lemington's bounty fell on deaf ears; and certain nomadic ne'er-do-wells who, hearing a wondrous story, sought out Browntown as being a land of milk and honey, were doomed to bitter disappointment. Lemington for Browntown, such was the decree of fate.

It was June again, and for a whole year Browntown had been fed at the hand of a philanthropist. Now all Browntown gathered at his bidding, and surged through the reconstructed mansion that was once called the McKinney place. Here, in the center of the

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village, on this June evening, was fairyland. Hundreds of Japanese lanterns lighted the grounds, while the house itself was aglow with brilliant illumination. An orchestra of twenty pieces furnished music, and in a temporary pavilion youth and age mingled in the dance. Finally, a favored few congregated in the drawing-room, and to them Lemington explained just this much:

"I came here, friends, because I was bored to death. I wanted to do something different, and I've done it. I've really had a lot of fun. I've spent a pile of money, and I've got my money's worth. I'd like to stay here right along, except when I want to stay away. This isn't home, but it may be. The question is, 'Shall I stay?' It's all up to just one person, and she's not very big, yet she's the whole of Browntown and all the world beside. Dorothy Deane, shall I stay?"

A shy, pretty girl gasped, blushed, and shrank behind a palm. Lemington walked right straight toward that palm.

"He's a crazy fool," growled the Jealous Man.

"Deliciously eccentric," declared the Club Woman.

"How romantic!" cried the Maiden Lady.

"Isn't he handsome, though?" interrogated Sweet Sixteen.

But Lemington heard just one word — Dorothy's softly spoken "Yes."

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Old Make-Good.*

BY LEROY WALLINGFORD.

THE horse stopped nibbling at the moldy straw and listened attentively. The horse had been listening for three days. He had grown tired of listening.

He wasn't an ordinary-looking horse. He was an extraordinary-looking one. He was toil-worn, girth-galled, and footsore. His forelegs were in bad shape, a cataract covered one eye; his lungs were troubled, and he had other defects that were visible to the eye of any person who knew where to look for them. And he was keenly sensitive to the defects. Every prospective buyer was exceedingly candid in commenting on them.

When the stable door opened, the horse pulled himself together and tried to get the kink out of his off foreleg. He stiffened his spine, curved his neck, and put a little action into his tail. He knew this was demanded of him, and all through his life he had tried to do all that was demanded of him. He had tried so hard to make good. With a little thrill of pride he remembered that they had nicknamed him "Old Make-Good" when he helped to pull the horse-cars across Manhattan. He held the good conduct record in the car barn. Other horses collapsed with the heat, took cranky spells and fits of laziness, but he had always remembered that the cars had to run to schedule, and the old bay gelding with the white blaze on his forehead became famous along Twenty-eighth Street. The drivers fought among themselves to get him in their teams, and they enlarged upon his virtues to the smart business men who rode on the front platform and presented the drivers with cigars. The drivers always made the business men think they knew something about horses, and the flattery so pleased the business men that they were liberal with the cigars.

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The old horse found it good to think over the past. He had never missed a boat or kept a crowd waiting at the Pennsylvania ferry. He had got there in spite of heat or snow.

The remembrance of those days braced him wonderfully, and the improvement in his appearance was immediately noticeable to the proprietor of the livery stable when he opened the door and invited a red-faced stranger to enter. It made the proprietor stress his words as he waved his hand in the direction of "Old Make-Good."

"There he is!" he shouted. "The best horse as stands in this city to-day."

The old horse stiffened his spine as the stranger walked slowly round him. During the three days he had been at the livery he had gone through the spine-stiffening process a dozen times a day.

"Abs'lootly the best," continued the proprietor, with some heat. "He's a horse that can pull his two ton up the side of the Flatiron if you want him to do it."

The stranger laughed quietly, and the owner became indignant.

"What are you laughin' at?" he asked savagely. "Don't you think he could do it?"

"Sure!" replied the other. "I'm laughing at you thinking the Flatiron people would allow your horse to spoil the walls pulling up the load."

The sarcasm hurt the dealer.

"I know the horse!" he screamed. "I've known him to shift four tons — yes, four tons! What d'ye think of that?"

"I knew a horse to shift twenty tons!" retorted the prospective buyer. "He shifted it from his feed bag into his stomach, but it took him a few years to do it."

Again he laughed sneeringly, and a cold perspiration broke out on "Old Make-Good." He was weak with shame. He was being ridiculed after fifteen years of labor, and he had always done his best.

The thrust silenced the horsedealer, but he glared viciously at the other while that person rubbed his hand down the injured foreleg.

"This prop wouldn't be much use to him in climbing Flatirons," sneered the stranger. "Feels like as if he'd been trying

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to stop some hot baseballs with it. You didn't tell me he was a ball player."

The owner met the sneer with a string of curses. "What d'ye expect?" he yelled. "I'm offerin' the old carcase at fifteen dollars, an' he's cheap. I don't want to smother up his little defects! You're one of these loose-tongued jays who don't know a mule from a rocking horse, and you think I've got nothing to do but listen to your chirrup."

"Don't get mad because I didn't go into raptures over your crock," laughed the visitor.

But the livery proprietor was excited. He followed the other across the stable yard, all the while criticizing his knowledge of horseflesh, and after he had seen him into the street he returned to the stall and punched "Old Make-Good" viciously in the ribs.

"You durned old crock," he growled, "you always try to look your worst when any one comes around to squint at you."

The old horse winced. He wondered how many more blows he would receive before a sale was effected. He wondered if a sale would ever be effected, or if he would be kicked or starved to death in the dirty stable.

Ten minutes afterwards he was still pondering over the problem when the stable door again opened, and the proprietor reappeared followed by a clean, wholesome-looking boy of about sixteen years of age. The proprietor looked jubilant.

"There he is!" he cried excitedly. "The finest old horse in Manhattan. Can pull two ton up a tenement stairway! Never shirks his work, doesn't wear out many shoes, and eats very little. Doesn't he look the thing?"

The boy walked around "Old Make-Good" and stared at him admiringly.

"He looks a good old fellow," he murmured.

The dealer patted the lad on the back approvingly.

"You're a young chap as knows a good thing," he cried. He *is* a good old fellow. Every other horse that was as good as him died from overworking themselves. That's what you want to be careful of. Don't let him overwork hisself! What did you say you wanted him for?"

The boy stammered uneasily. "Father died last week," he said,

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" and I thought if I had a quiet horse I could sell fruit and vegetables so as to get enough money to keep mother."

" Old Make-Good " glanced at the boy's innocent face and then at the cunning grin on the features of the livery man.

" Well, that's your horse ! " shouted the dealer. " I'm letting you have him for sixty dollars just because you're a young fellow makin' a start in the world, but to any one else his price is a hundred. Don't you think he's cheap ? "

" He's very, very cheap," assented the boy, and he walked forward and patted " Old Make-Good " on the nose. " I'll go right back and get the money from Mother," he continued. " She's just keeping it till I had a look at him."

The livery man told him to lose no time, as some one else might be along to snap up the bargain, and the boy raced madly away.

When the stable door closed again, the old horse looked around. The boy was being robbed. He knew he wasn't worth the fifteen dollars that had been asked of the first man. But sixty ! He shuddered from his nose to his tail as he thought over the youth's innocence.

Again he looked around the dirty, rotten stable. What could he do to save the boy from the horse sharper — the sharper who had struck him viciously only a few minutes before !

Just above his head a heavy beam supported the loft. The horse eyed it carefully. The wall of the stable had moved out of the perpendicular, and one end of the beam had a very insecure resting place. " Old Make-Good " wondered how the livery proprietor had overlooked the danger. A restive animal, by kicking the support from under the beam, would demolish the barn. The horse thrilled as he saw how easily it could be done. And if it were done ?

For the space of fully five minutes the old horse thought over his life. He had done everything that was demanded of him. He had always made good. Joyfully he recalled the days when he had galloped with the heavy horse-cars. He recollected how the passengers had bribed the drivers with cigars to catch boats and trains, and how he, " Old Make-Good, " had earned those cigars. Yet he had received nothing but the wounds and scars.

The proprietor of the livery stable was dozing peacefully while

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he waited for the return of the boy with the sixty dollars, when a tremendous crashing noise caused him to spring to his feet. He dashed across the yard and caromed heavily into a frightened groom.

"What's the matter?" yelled the proprietor.

"The loft fell in and killed that old crock you wus just tryin' to sell," stammered the man. "I knew that beam would slip one of these days."

The livery man was speechless for the space of three minutes. The cloud of dust that rose from the ruins floated down the street. He watched it with stupid, staring eyes, and then he saw something that made him curse fearfully. The clean, wholesome-looking boy with the sixty dollars in his hand was running up the sidewalk.

"Old Make-Good" had kept his reputation untarnished to the end.

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For Dear Old Yale.*

BY JAMES LANGSTON.

[This story, which appeared in THE BLACK CAT twelve years ago, is reprinted by request.]

IN a hundred towns along the upper waters of the Euphrates was sounding the steady lu-lu-lu of fanatical hordes slaughtering Christians. The Kurds were abroad, with battle cries of Islam on their lips, and the mercy of tigers in their hearts. The Turkish soldiery looked on stolidly at the butchery, sometimes helping it, though vowing with much talk that they were out for the defense. The Armenians simply died, as is their way, sometimes by tens, sometimes by thousands.

At the mission station five miles from Harput some Christians of a different type were gathered,— fighting Christians, who knew the uses of soap and gunpowder, and had a flag worth talking about to protect them, a flag with stripes on it and stars, that has been heard of in the world. Still this flag was far away and the Kurds were near.

There were men here and women, sheltered in a stone house with a stone wall around it, built by Ohio Presbyterians to show people who wear turbans how people who wear pot hats do such things as preaching and decimal fractions. The women in the house were sure there was no danger; the men, excepting Professor Peabody, knew they would be lucky if they were not massacred to the last mother's child.

Gathered here in this mission station, and well content to have the stone wall around them, and shooting tackle within, were some twenty-five souls, six of them Americans, the rest natives of one breed or another who had accepted the story of Jesus and were suffering for it. There were half a dozen students from the Euphrates College, now a pile of smoldering ruins in Harput. earnest-eyed young men, who had fled from death with their

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Bibles and flowing trousers and their small black fezes. There were some Armenian girls and women, beautiful, submissive creatures, born to be bought and sold, to suffer and die. There were three American ladies, two of them teachers from Constantinople, and one the wife of Father Asdadur, as he was called, the finest old missionary in all Asia Minor, and in charge of the station. Then there were two newly arrived missionaries, one with his bride, who had come from New England in service of the Board, and were pushing on to the East and wondering how far they would get. Finally, there was a man from Chicago who told "funny" stories and had great enterprise. He was a rug merchant who had journeyed inland for bargains in Daghestans and Cashmeres, and heartily wished he had stuck to the seaport bazaars.

Beyond doubt, the most learned member of this handful of Christians, and yet the most unwise, was Professor Walter Lathrop Sheffield Peabody (to give him all his names), a very famous man, whom Yale University had sent out to oversee some archæological excavations in the valley of the Euphrates. This they had done because Professor Peabody understood archæology as well as sociology, and Greek, and many other things. Indeed, he was Yale's bright, particular star, one of those men who are irritatingly brilliant. He had a wonderful memory, he was a wonderful whist player, he was a wonderful conversationalist, in fact he was fitted for nearly everything except dealing with Xeibeck chieftains, who, between you and me, care no more for a New Haven lion than they do for a Persian cat. The professor's folly had come on this very morning when he had fired a rifle shot at a group of horsemen passing in the distance. To understand why he did this takes us back to the week before, when the company inside the mission walls had defended themselves as best they could, and fortunately with success, against some Kurdish stragglers who had conceived it a pleasant pastime to loot the place and kill the people in it, at least the men. And in this skirmish the versatile professor had come off less gloriously than was his wont; indeed, to tell plain truth, when he heard the bullets pattering about and the cries of the marauders, he had gone back into one of the inner rooms — and stayed there.

Fortunately the affair had turned out all right, thanks mainly

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to the lion fighting of young Eli Morris, a protégé of Peabody's and a notable in his own way at Yale, where it was said that no man had ever passed him on the football field, and no man had ever failed to pass him in the class room. Eli was on this archæological business because his father, who was rich, thought that a year or so abroad with Professor Peabody would do the boy worlds of good and incidentally keep him out of mischief. Not that Eli needed watching, for a finer fellow than he never took a Yale A. B. and marveled when he got it. And no dog ever loved its master better than he loved the professor; there was something pathetic in his attitude of humility toward this resplendent man of learning, in whom he saw everything that was good and great, while he, well, he was only Eli Morris. Yet, in this business with the Kurds the professor had been unmistakably nervous, while Eli was down at the gate treating the screaming devils as if they were some scrub eleven trying to score against the 'Varsity.

And the memory of this rankled in Peabody's mind, for he had the habit of excelling all men in all things, and it was bitter to his self-esteem to have a man who had been dropped through two or three classes outshine him in a time of crisis. So, on this day, when he espied some horsemen passing in the distance, he picked up his rifle very quietly and, before any one could stop him, fired a chance shot at long range. He would show these people that he was on the alert for danger, and, if he happened to hit any one, why, so much the better. This might not have been such a bad idea, at least no harm would have come of it, if the horsemen had been Kurds, as the professor supposed. But it chanced that they were a Xeibeck band, the fiercest and most lawless tribe in all Kurdistan, and they cared neither for God nor Sultan, and boasted that they cut down Mussulmans and Christians with equal delight. This was the target Professor Peabody had chosen for the display of his marksmanship and the bolstering up of his pride.

"You don't think you hit any one, do you, professor?" asked Father Asdadur anxiously.

"I don't know," answered the professor; "I adjusted my globe sight very carefully, and am usually a fair judge of distance." He spoke as if his skill of the hand was alone in question, and took the same tone he would have used in arguing about a cut-

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stroke in tennis. "If we must fight anyhow, we may as well take the aggressive," he continued; but he did not exactly mean this, he simply objected to the old missionary's manner. The old missionary, however, had lived along the upper waters of the Euphrates for over fifteen years. He had seen Xeibecks before.

"God help us," he muttered, "if he did hit one of them."

All through the afternoon stragglers reached the station, the weak flying from the strong, and some of them were wounded, and all brought tales of horror — of houses burned, of stores pillaged, of people killed and outraged. About sundown, while the ladies were dressing for dinner, there came to the house a messenger, a huge, bearded man, with cunning, squint eyes set in the face of a patriach, and he talked for awhile to Father Asdadur in a sing-song voice, and then went away. When the missionary came in his face looked graver than usual, and he took Morris aside and told him that which made him look grave, too.

"We will call the men together after dinner," said Father Asdadur, "and give them the sheikh's message."

"Wait till the evening's over," said Eli; "the ladies have arranged some games and things."

Meanwhile Professor Peabody was pointing out to the ladies, in his happiest way, the picturesque points in the messenger's costume — his gaudily embroidered garment of skin, his knotted turban, his queer leggins and trousers — and was arguing with the rug man as to whether he was a Kurd or not.

"Was that fellow a Kurd, Father Asdadur?" he asked, when the man had gone.

"No, he was a Xeibeck."

"There, I was sure of it. You see, I have made a careful study of these tribal characteristics."

The evening passed delightfully, so the ladies declared, and Professor Peabody was the soul of the occasion. He was charming in serious talk, forceful in argument, abundant in epigram and clever mots, and even condescended to old-fashioned conundrums for the delectation of the Constantinople teachers, who, having spent their lives away from New Haven, had never heard a ramrod described as "my first is a kind of butter, my second a kind of liquor, and my whole a part of a gun," and other brilliant

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riddles of the sort. And then they sang college songs and plantation melodies, and one of the ladies made much fun of Eli's bass, which, she declared, invariably went up when it should have gone down, and *vice versa*. Indeed, Eli made a poor enough showing except when the professor got him to tell how, on a certain Thanksgiving day, when he was playing right tackle for Yale, he bucked his way through Princeton's whole rush line and made sixty yards for a touch-down, thus saving the game. But the story was half spoiled in the telling, for he jumbled it all together and failed to make impressive pauses, as good storytellers do. The professor would have been much better — at telling the story.

"What a pity Mr. Morris hasn't more brains," whispered one of the school teachers to Professor Peabody.

"He has a good heart!" said the professor complacently.

"And he is so handsome and brave, isn't he?"

"Ye-es, I suppose he is," said Peabody, less complacent now.

After it was all over and the ladies had rustled away to bed, Father Asdadur brought the men together around a table on which were things to smoke. Then he announced very quietly that the Xeibeck sheikh had sent word that his band would attack the mission station at sunrise unless a white Christian, one of their number, be delivered over to be shot.

At this there were exclamations from all the men except Morris, who, as he knew it all beforehand, merely sat still with his long legs crossed, and puffed away at his pipe.

"This is an outrage, it is infamous!" said Professor Peabody, and was launching into a pretty speech when the old missionary interrupted: "This is a country, sir, of outrages and infamy."

"But we are American citizens; the Sultan must protect us."

"The Sultan is powerless, and four days' marching could scarcely bring troops here. The Xeibecks will be at our gates when the sun comes up; they keep their appointments."

"But there must be some way of reasoning with this sheikh; we can make it worth his while; let him name a ransom."

Father Asdadur shook his head. "You do not know the Xeibecks. They come out of the mountains east of Smyrna, they live on bread and olives, they sleep in black tents. What would they do with your ransom? They want but one thing, blood for

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blood. One of their men was killed by one of our bullets; they insist that one of our men shall be killed by one of theirs."

All eyes were fixed on the professor, who stirred uneasily.

"Gentlemen," said he, after a troubled pause, "I suppose I am responsible for this catastrophe. I probably fired the shot —"

"Not so sure about that," put in Morris. "I popped away at our friends two or three times, myself, this afternoon."

Every man in the room, with one possible exception, felt that this statement was false, and knew also why Morris had made it. Perhaps the professor thought it was true; at any rate, he made no sign. "Yes," went on Eli in a matter-of-fact tone, "I thought maybe it would scare 'em away to see we were not afraid."

"Exactly my idea," said the professor, "Why can't we defend ourselves the way we — way we — did the other day?"

The professor flushed as he remembered that other day.

"My friends," said Father Asdadur, with deep impressiveness, "I've lived in this region a long time, and understand its ways. In my time I have seen massacres. I saw Heghgate burned, and the butcheries of Erzrum. My mother and my two sisters were killed at Hedink, my uncle and four cousins were killed at Trebizond. I know whereof I speak! The Xeibecks are the fiercest fighters in Syria, and they outnumber us ten to one. We might hold out against them an hour or two, not longer. After that you know what will happen." He glanced toward the stairway, whence the sound of laughter and women's talk floated down. Each man looked his neighbor in the eyes; they understood.

"This is horrible!" exclaimed one of the younger missionaries, a pale-faced graduate of a theological seminary, who had come out only the year before. His wife was one of the women upstairs.

"See here," said Morris abruptly, putting down his pipe, "there's no use trying to dodge this thing; there are twenty-five people here to be saved, and one of us six has got to do it." There was such conviction in his tone that the others felt the uselessness of further talk; even Professor Peabody was silent.

It is an interesting time when six men sit down together to agree calmly which one of them shall stop living. It was now one o'clock in the morning, the sun rose at five, they had four hours in which to decide. One of them had four hours to live.

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"Do you all accept the sheikh's terms?" asked Father Asdadur, after a long pause.

One after another the men accepted.

"Then I propose that we make the choice by lot."

There was another long silence.

"Gentlemen," said Morris, blowing out clouds of smoke, "I've been thinking of something. I believe I know why I was sent to this God-forsaken country. I never did know until now. I think I'm the man to meet these beggars in the morning. I don't see any sense in drawing lots. Look at it sensibly, now; you five men are all doing something worth while, helping somebody, making the world better. I've never done a thing except give the governor trouble, and blow in his money, and get dropped and suspended, and get myself laughed at, and — and" (with a gulp) "kick football a little. Besides that, you're married men with families, but it don't matter a hang about me. So you'll please consider me nominated for this business in the morning."

It is doubtful if, in all his life, Eli had ever made so long a speech as this; it is certain he had never made such an impression. Father Asdadur reached across the table and clasped the young man's strong white hand in his brown, bony one.

"God bless you, my son," he said; "you have a brave heart, but the thing is impossible, quite impossible."

And all the others said it was impossible, too. What else could they say? So they came back to the lot-drawing idea, and the rug man proposed that cards should point the finger of fate.

"I never played cards in my life," said Father Asdadur.

"Neither did I," said one of the missionaries, but the other admitted having learned poker in his young manhood.

"Let it be poker, then," said the rug man, "cold hands with a draw. I'll show you in a jiffy. Look here, I deal you each five cards, like that;" — he produced a pack of cards from somewhere and began to shuffle them,— "understand, you have the privilege of drawing once, and the lowest hand loses."

Then, with the cards lying face upward on the table, he explained to the two beginners the value of a pair, two pairs, three of a kind, and so on — the ordinary hands of draw poker. The others looked on indifferently; after all, as well a choice by cards

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as any other means. When the two missionaries had learned their lesson, the man from Chicago said: "Now, if you've got that in your heads, we will play in earnest. First jack deals."

And he dealt until a jack fell before Father Asdadur.

"Shall we let one deal settle it?" asked Morris.

"Why not have it this way," suggested the professor, never lacking in a happy suggestion, "why not have the high man drop out after each deal and leave the others to fight it out? Then the choice will come between the two left in at the last."

This modification was agreed to, and Father Asdadur dealt the first hand, dealt it in silence, and his very clumsiness added to the tension. The six men studied their cards, threw down their discards, called for the number they wanted, and then declared what they had. It was absolute chance disposing of a life. The man from Chicago had three kings and went out; he was safe. In the next round, Father Asdadur found fortune and went out in his turn. Then one after another the young missionaries held the highest hand, and so escaped the danger. The last hand came between Morris and Professor Peabody. Morris dealt.

"One card," said the professor, and his lips were dry.

"I'll take one," said Morris.

Both men discarded a single card, picked up a single card, and then slowly looked at it.

"Aces up," said the professor.

"I drew for a flush," said Morris, with a huskiness in his voice, "and — I didn't fill."

He threw down his cards, and for a moment no one spoke.

"It's all right," said Eli, "fate understands these things. I told you I was the man to go."

That broke the spell, and the others crowded about him with show of sympathy. No doubt they were sorry for him; no doubt they were not sorry for themselves. How do men feel on a raft when one of their number has been chosen to go overboard to save the rest? That's the way they felt. No one could sleep and no one tried to sleep. The rug man from Chicago paced up and down in front of the house, the assistant missionaries talked together in low tones on the veranda, and Professor Peabody gave Father Asdadur some meaty ideas on the proper way to deal with

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the heathen. Morris wrote letters to his family and one to a girl.

About half an hour before sunrise sounds from the upper regions warned them that the ladies were dressing. There was some excursion planning, no doubt, and their laughter and gay talk showed that they were in the best of humors.

"Hello!" said Morris, "we'll have the women folks down here in a minute," and then going quickly to the others, he charged them on no account to let the ladies know. "I'm glad they're coming down, though," he said to himself; "it's good to have an American girl or two around."

A little later there was an invasion from above, the ladies fresh in their cool morning gowns, and some of them pretty. Coffee was served with a light meal, and just as the sun was rising, Morris stood up and asked the company to sing "Here's to Good Old Yale." At this the men came up like soldiers on parade, and the women rose, too, yielding to an influence they did not understand, and they all sang the old song as perhaps it had never been sung before, certainly not in Kurdistan. While in the centre of the group, with lifted coffee-pot, stood Morris, towering half a head over every one, and singing his home-made bass with all the power that was in him, his eyes flashing wondrously.

"There are Eli's fine old discords again," said one of the girls, giggling, and she was much surprised that none of the men laughed.

Suddenly there came the sound of marching feet outside. A hoarse command rang out and gun butts grounded on the gravel. The ladies rushed to the window.

"It's some of those horrid Kurds!" cried one.

Then the ladies joined in laughing at the queer uniforms and the ugly faces. Morris, meantime, unobserved, had shaken hands with the other men.

Father Asdadur rose hastily and went to the front of the house. As he went out Eli exchanged glances with him.

"You ladies stay here," he said; "I'll go out and see what it is."

The other men followed after and stood about awkwardly. The sheikh came forward with a fine dignity of presence and said something in his native tongue. Father Asdadur replied, and then there was parleying.

"Make them understand," said Professor Peabody, "that I

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represent one of the greatest institutions in the United States, and can promise them anything they desire."

"The sheikh says that he has never heard of the United States," said Father Asdadur, translating; "he says he has given his terms and has come for an answer."

"But tell him, for God's sake, make him understand, that this young man comes of fine family, that his father is very rich, that — that — that he has been entrusted to my keeping."

"The sheikh says that the young man of their band who was killed from here had a father and mother, too."

"Don't bother about it any more," said Eli, touching the professor's arm; it isn't much, anyhow." And he stepped forward with just the same unflinching look in his eyes he had shown in the old days when summoned before the faculty.

"But," cried the professor, stepping forward, "who can positively say that the bullet which killed this poor warrior came from here?"

The sheikh turned to one of his followers, who opened a leathern pouch and drew something from it.

"The sheikh presents you the bullet with his compliments, and says that it comes from a rifle the like of which does not exist in all Kurdistan. He speaks the truth. This is a bullet from a Martini rifle; yours is the only rifle it could come from." Then he added very slowly, "I congratulate you, professor, on your marksmanship."

By this time the Xeibecks were plainly growing impatient and motioned that they would wait no longer.

"Good-by, professor," said Eli, head high, but eyes saying things. Then hesitating: "You know it's all — all — for 'Dear Old Yale,'" and he gripped the professor's well-shaped hand in an athlete's squeeze.

"Where are you going, Mr. Morris?" asked one of the girls from one of the windows.

"Oh, just to see these fellows do some musket practice," said Eli lightly.

"Look!" exclaimed another, "they're taking him by the arms! Why, they're leading him off like a prisoner!"

"Don't be alarmed," called Eli, "it's just a joke. Say, ladies,

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friends, professor, let's give it to 'em once again, the old song. And he himself struck up:—

"Here's to good old Yale, drink her down,
Here's to good old Yale, drink her down,
Here's to good old Yale,
She's so hearty and so hale,
Drink her down, drink her down, drink her down, down, down."

And he kept on singing while three barbarians, who knew no more of Yale than they did of mercy, formed on either side of him and started at the word of command.

As the sun came over the hills, lighting up the glories of the Euphrates valley, this little company of Christians, far from their homes, stood on the piazza and watched the departing group, while their voices sounded out in the dear old words. And while they sang the Xeibeck band marched slowly up the slope, until the last thing seen of Eli was his figure outlined on the hilltop in the red sunshine, while his voice came down faintly to his friends in the chorus that has been sung by the brave men of many brave classes, and will be sung as long as Yale endures:—

"Balm of Gilead, Gilead,
Balm of Gilead, Gilead,
We won't go there any more, we won't go there any more."

"Why, how queer you men look," said the wife of the young missionary; "what's the matter?"

Just then the sound of shots came over the hill and echoed away in the distance.

"They're shooting already," said one of the Constantinople teachers.

"Yes," said Father Asdadur, his eyes resting tenderly on the hilltop, "they're shooting."

"Good God," said Professor Peabody to himself, "this is awful;" and then he told the truth.

"O girls," came a voice from within, "see here, I do believe these men have been playing poker! Think of that at a mission station! Just look at this table!"

Mrs. Asdadur was speaking, and the ladies hurried to her call. The men followed after them.

"This is a good hand, isn't it, professor?" she said, picking up

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five cards that lay on top of the others. Rather absently Professor Peabody looked over her shoulder, then started back, with knitting brows. The cards lay on the table just as they had been thrown down after that last fateful deal. He picked up the five cards lying next. It was his hand, two aces, two eight spots, and a jack — no danger of his forgetting that.

Turning to the other men, he said: "Morris drew for a flush, didn't he?"

"Yes, poor chap," said the rug man. "Don't you remember he threw down when he didn't fill?"

"I remember," said the professor, and was silent for a full half minute, and his face became very white. Then he said, with a look in his eyes no one had ever seen there, "Gentlemen, this is Morris's hand; he did fill."

And at that moment Professor Walter Lathrop Sheffield Peabody (to give him all his names again) understood that Yale University had turned out a bigger man than he.

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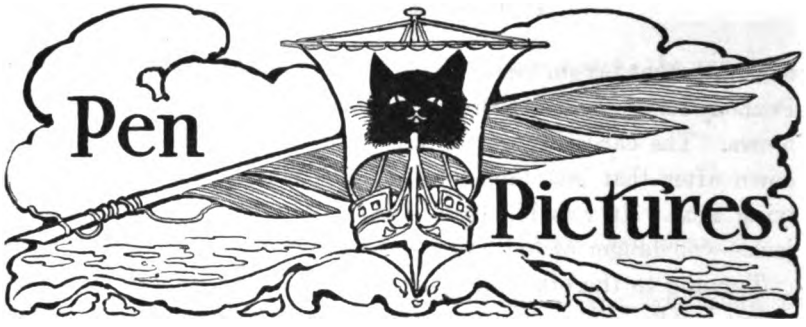

The Weirdest Land on Earth.*

No. IV.

The Dwellers of the Outback.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

Australia is the home of the white gypsy. The Outback has, in its picturesque assortment of Sundowners, Whalers, Hatters, Fossickers, and unclassified wanderers of all conditions, a Legion of Devil-May-Care that no other country can muster. The climate suits the nomad. It is a perpetual sun bath, and the trail calls him always.

But the bush wanderer is not a hobo. He does not beg food — he demands it. And the wool king finds that it is false economy to be niggardly with his flour barrel. Where the grass is dry and parched, and the thermometer is above one hundred and twenty, a careless Sundowner who happens to regard the wool grower through whose sheep run he is passing as a mean man, may forget to quench his camp fire! The damage wrought by a fire sweeping through the pasture is more formidable than a flour bill. Police stations are few and far between, and so every Sundowner, on arriving at the homestead, hands his flour bag to the storekeeper, and, not content with donations for his damper, or ash cake, will make a touch for tea and tobacco. The sheep-breeder hates the vagabond tramps with the same hate that he turns upon the crow and the rabbit, but he is judicious. The heel of a beer bottle skilfully inverted over a piece of rag dipped in oil will cause the tropical sun to make a blaze that will take

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in five miles of drought-smitten country, and while the wool king's army is battling with the flames, the tramp will be miles away.

The Bush — weird, silent, and mysterious — calls the dreamer, the failure, the ne'er-do-well, the perpetually tired. It casts upon him a spell that he can never shake off. The American hobo creeps into the cities in the winter, and the trail loses its grip upon his heartstrings, but the Australian nomad hates the cities. The throb of the big towns is purgatory to him. He stays with the Silence always, and his soul is saturated with the mystery.

Along the creeks, by the quiet lagoons, in the clumps of moaning she-oaks, one finds his camp. He is indifferent to time or season. He has no objective. All trails are the same to him. The tropics have cyanided the ambition from his system, and he is a spineless gypsy.

The Whaler, as he is called, because his principal article of diet consists of fresh-water cod, known to the natives as whales — is found along the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan and Darling. He is the man in whose breast Hope and Ambition are dead. Fish and rabbits are plentiful, the wool raiser can be successfully touched for flour, and the skins of the rabbit can be exchanged for tobacco. Life is therefore simple, care-free, and untroubled.

A most motley band are the river gypsies. One finds among them the retired soldier of fortune, who has hobnobbed with princes, as well as the plain, every-day citizen who was born tired and is down on his luck — both leading the same open-air life. Only a few years ago a near relative of the Duke of Norfolk died as a whaler. To-day, on the Murrumbidgee, a former bosom chum of King Edward VII. exists on the monotonous menu of rabbit and codfish, while the long-lost heir of a Yorkshire baronetcy was unearthed there last year. He was unshaved, unshorn and tattered, but he pulled himself together when he heard that the four relatives who stood between him and the Title had left for a place where baronets are unknown. In honor of the occasion he invited all the whalers camped within fifty miles to muster at his hut, and there, with much pomp and ceremony, he buried his flour-bag, blankets and billycan, an Oxford

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graduate reading the funeral service. After banqueting the unwashed assemblage the new baronet hastened to Melbourne to catch the first Peninsula and Oriental steamer for England. But the gypsies count on his coming back. They know how impossible it is to throw off the witchery of the bush. The working bushman feels its influence as well as the spineless wanderer. The bush will call him back twelve thousand miles. In London a whiff of wattle or eucalyptus will strike his nostrils, and he will become suddenly homesick. The bush has called him. The bush that he has cursed a thousand times has sent a wireless message, and before he has recovered from the attack he will be steaming east of Suez on the long road home.

The Remittance Man is also found among the gypsies of the Outback. He is the exiled son of the British aristocrat who found that the sowing of wild oats by his offspring was fatal to his own respectability. The quarterly remittance is paid on the distinct understanding that the black sheep will remain outside a ten-thousand-mile radius of Piccadilly, and amongst the Whalers of the rivers, and the Sundowners of the overland trails one finds Remittance Men whose early life was spent in the best circles of Belgravia and Mayfair.

With only one type of the gypsy army Hope still lives — the Fossicker. He is the camp follower who forages on deserted gold fields, in dry creek beds and worn watercourses, and has never-ending dreams of wealth. For him there still exists an undiscovered nugget larger than "The Welcome Stranger," the biggest lump of gold ever found in Australia or the whole world. Like the garbage raker who lives on what others have overlooked or carelessly cast aside, he diligently searches the spots that have been deserted by the strenuous pioneers who have rushed on to new fields.

The gray, monotonous solitude and weird silence give to the Australian bush an atmosphere of awful horror. The bushman's stories are stories of mystery and dread. They tell of the Coach of Death, with its eight black horses and silent driver, that sweeps across the western plains to gather in the souls of men who die in drought time. They relate how the cattle stampede on moonlight nights, because the beasts have

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seen the wraith of long dead bushmen gallop across the gray wastes.

"Out at the back of the Never Never
That's where the dead men lie—
Twisting and moaning and turning ever—
See how the cattle fly."

And they call up the Shadow of Death Hotel, the will-o'-the-wisp lights in whose windows beckon to the thirst-maddened wanderer when his hour has come, and he struggles frantically towards the mirage. It is a weird, strange, haunted heart that the big continent possesses. The aboriginals knew this long before Captain Cook landed at Botany Bay, over a hundred years ago. To them the dark lagoons were filled at night with the most terrifying of all ghosts — the bunyips — and they were pursued by hideous phantoms on the plains where that huge, spectre-like bird — the crane-necked, stilt-legged Native Companion, performs his fantastic sunset dance.

The birds and animals accentuate the feeling of mystery that hangs over the interior. They all are distinctively Australian. The laughing jackass has no prototype. The kangaroo is a freak animal creation, while the duckbilled platypus is a combination of both bird and animal.

The laughing jackass is the sole Australian who sees humor in the bush. His maniacal laugh startles the wanderer at all hours of the day, but at sunrise and sunset he is particularly merry, for which reason he is known as The Settlers' Clock. He calls the bushman to his labor at dawn and summons him home at night.

His cachinnatory stunt is not the only one that has made the feathered jackass famous. He is an expert snake killer, and on that account he is protected by the government, which imposes a fine upon any person found guilty of killing the bird or keeping it in captivity. As the only living thing that finds something to laugh at in the weird, silent drought-stricken interior, the laughing jackass is certainly entitled to his freedom. He looks down upon the struggling wool king, the mortgage-burdened farmer, the shepherd who in his loneliness talks to the trees, the solitary Hatter, whom heat and loneliness have driven crazy,

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the fighting army of shearers, stockmen and drovers, who battle continuously, and through it all he sits "like Patience on a monument, smiling at grief." The blacks still believe that the god of misfortune inhabits the body of the laughing jackass, and when the bird laughs at their unsuccessful attempt to run down an old-man kangaroo, they go back to their gunyahs and help their gins with the piccaninnies. They see no hope of catching a 'roo when the god of evil is chuckling at their earnest efforts.

The Hatter is a unit always. He receives his title not from the fact that he wears a festoon of small pieces of cork dangling from the brim of his hat to keep away the myriads of flies, but because he works only by himself, or, as the bushmen express it, "under his own hat." He makes no mates; he evades the tin-roofed clusters of weather-board cottages that dot the interior, and his dislike for human beings is so great that he leaves the trail and sidles into the gray scrub whenever he sees a traveler approaching.

The bush dweller is distinctly pessimistic. A note of despair rings continually across the continent. The evenness of the four seasons that pass with little variation in the thermometer gives him a jaundiced view of things. He is intensely morbid. He rides sixty miles to a funeral and wears crape around his hat and sleeve till the emblem of woe becomes a shred, or till another death compels him to change the bandage for a new one. Matters are always getting worse with him, and Australia at the present time finds that her "man on the land" will not stay on the land, or, if he does stay, he is deserted by his sons, who feel the hopelessness of the battle and betake themselves to the cities, where the caw of the hungry crow and the mocking laugh of the jackass do not offend their ears. The weird expectancy of the bush frightens the imaginative, and the native-born Australian is imaginative. He wonders why the kangaroo and wallaby sit motionless and watch on the dry plains. He wonders why the quaint, harmless little creature — the native bear, the real "Teddy" by the way — clutches the limbs of the gum trees as if he feared a sudden shock that would fling him into space. He wonders why the jackass laughs, why the Native Companion

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waltzes on the brown waste; wonders over the Mystery and the Silence, wonders until he is afraid to stay.

Australia cannot get the man who wants to abide on the land, and the man who is there is continually packing up his baggage and rushing back to the cities — the five bright eyes of the Island Continent, where the lights flash, where the whirling fans cool the atmosphere, and the noise of the trolley cars keeps away the maddening silence that hangs ominously over the sunbaked interior.

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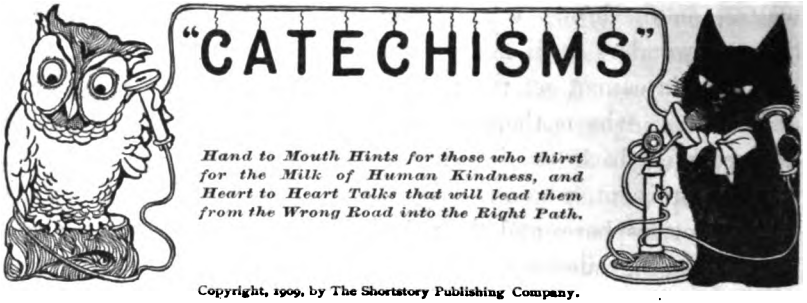

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Has the size of a hen anything to do with the size of the eggs she lays and if not why not? Where can one get Easter eggs such as are served in the best society? — LILLIAN.

1. No. A hen can lay eggs of any size she pleases. It is purely a matter of ambition. Where the ambition is lacking it is supplied by increasing the size of the nest egg from day to day. This is why goose eggs are frequently laid by hens. Being proud by nature the hen will equal the sample placed under her.

2. In the best society Easter eggs are laid to order by hens of artistic temperament. This latter is developed by suspending before the nest some eggs of the desired hues and also placing a rainbow colored Easter egg in the nest.

Can you suggest something original and inexpensive which will aid an ambitious country girl in entertaining some friends at a birthday luncheon party? — GLADYS.

Why not try the barn-yard chorus? Take a tin dinner horn about four feet long, run it through a hole in the centre of the table and floor underneath. Allow the large end to project six inches above the table and conceal with loosely strewn clover blossoms. To the mouthpiece in the cellar attach a rubber hose and run it out to the barn, being sure to insert a large kitchen funnel at the end. Before your friends arrive coop up in the barn chickens, ducks, geese, also a cow and calf or two, and some young pigs if possible. As soon as your guests are seated get your little brother to enter the barn with Fido and raise a commotion among the inmates. By placing the end of the hose containing the funnel near the door and leaving the latter slightly ajar the fowl and animals will rush madly in that direction and thus convey the barn-yard chorus to the astonished lunchers. If you have a musical hired man he can regale your guests by rendering such old time favorites as "When She Swallowed Home-Made Pies," "Katherine Manoeuvering," and "The Heart Boiled Down with Grease and Care." He can soon acquire that rich metallic note of the real gramophone by attuning his voice to the filing of a saw.

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JUNE, 1909.

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The Friend of the Fool.*

BY HELEN ELLSWORTH WRIGHT.

GORDON MORSE tramped home, his portfolio bulging with specimens. The "Court Fool," a brindled, bow-legged, undershot bull-dog, trotted excitedly ahead with his face to the trail. At the cabin, he gave a disgruntled "Yap."

"Hello!" the man cried, observing in astonishment that his usually open door was closed; then he stood still. Above it, on an improvised signboard, were the words "Mary's Inn." A note, too, was pinned to the casing.

"Mary's not in," it read, "but she might have been, even yet, if you'd stayed at home to receive her, you contrary old batch."

Gordon stared in amazement. "Well, it's quite as well for 'Mary' that she's not," he retorted.

In the cabin, tall, tasseled branches of his cherished mountain currant nodded at him from the fireplace; they greeted him from the book-shelves. An oil-can had been swathed in brown paper. It stood in the middle of his work table, topped by a shower bouquet. A blot had blurred his manuscript. The kitchen was

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in order; he had left his breakfast dishes with those from his supper, while he finished an article on the "Umbelliferæ." The floor had been swept. A savoryness pervaded the room. The Court Fool was greedily sniffing at the table.

"Biscuits!" Gordon ejaculated, his eyes widening. "Gingerbread! Who in all —" He spied a paper under the plate. On it was scribbled:

"Mary had a cousin, dear,
She loved him well, you know,
So when he to the mountains went,
Why, Mary had to go.

"Her mother came for chaperon,
(She didn't mind a bit!)
Now, hunt, perhaps you'll find them;
It's hide and seek; you're 'It.'"

"By all the Horns of the Altar!" Gordon exploded. "I never had a cousin Mary! I don't want one!"

He went cautiously through the cabin, half unconsciously peering under things,— behind things. He eyed the gingerbread as if it held dynamite. It was good to the look and alluringly odorous; at last —. There was little but crumbs when he turned to his specimens. He changed the drying-pads; then he left them unweighted and went out to stare at the signboard.

The next day he laid a trap. He tidied the rooms, left the door invitingly ajar, and retired in ambush, to the kitchen. From the window he could see the trail. He told himself that she would return, this 'Mary'; she would be the species of girl he detested. He thought of a line from Proverbs with which to greet her, "The highway of the upright is to depart." No doubt, she was a very young person; from the pinnacle of his thirty years, he would show her, in a kind, middle-aged fashion, the error of her ways. He waited four days before he decided that she was not coming back.

The morning after that, he overslept, and awoke to stretch luxuriantly and stare through the open door. A choir of birds were singing. His mountain, shagged with oak and laurel and madrone, was quilted with early sunshine. With half shut eyes, he followed the path to his cabin, curving, dipping, climbing —

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Suddenly he sprang to his feet. Around the nearest bend, loped a white pony, and on its back was a girl.

The room offered no shelter. Gordon bounded to the kitchen, to the woodhouse. He watched through a crack in its door.

The girl whistled a quail-call. She was not what he had pictured. He had an inward prompting to get her away from there, quick. He wondered if it would answer if he shouted "Bears!" Then, he heard the jingle of the Court Fool's bells; it was like the assurance of rescue.

"That bull-dog doesn't bite," he gleefully whispered, "but you don't happen to know it! If you don't — RUN —"

She stooped with a childish cry of delight. "Oh, you beautifully ugly thing," she coaxed. "We thought you were a collie!"

The dog was whining, barking, giving joyous licks at her hand. She caught him to read the inscription on his collar: "Dagonet, Court Fool."

"If that isn't like him," she laughed. "Why, he wrote me your name was 'Dan.'"

Gordon groaned. He pulled the door closer shut, planning impossible escapes,— possible meetings.

A moment afterwards, he heard her in the cabin. She was — yes, she was undoubtedly putting it in order. Presently, dishes rattled . . . He sniffed the aroma of coffee. The minutes were hours in the woodhouse. It seemed at least a week later that she came to the cabin door to scan the timber with wide, deep-blue eyes. She personified, he owned, a word of four letters, H-O-M-E. Her blue linen sleeves were rolled up,— a dab of flour set off one glowing cheek. Again, she whistled the quail-call. The dog gazed up adoringly. She knelt and took his cockled head between brown, capable hands,— shapely, beautiful hands, Gordon acknowledged.

"Dagonet," she nodded, "we're ready to fry the bacon! Go find him! *Go find your master!* Go on!"

Obediently, the Court Fool whirled, scented, and made for the woodhouse, scratching madly at its door. His bark was apologetic, glad, — a bark that cried, — "There are three of us! I'd forgotten!"

The girl who followed him did not understand. She looked

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Gordon full in the face before the door slammed and he heard the slip of the bolt. Her step was uncertain, as if from fright, as she went towards the cabin.

Five minutes passed — ten. He was sure she had fainted. This was a pretty mess, he told himself. He wished she was in Jericho! Probably she was lying in a limp little heap on his floor. Well, he'd have to do something. He put his shoulder against the door. It was then, through a crack, he saw her coming. She carried his gun. She came straight to the wood-house and sat down on a rock outside, an erect, determined sentinel.

Through the crack, he studied her profile. Her nose was tip-tilted; her hair rippled. Her mouth was firm, but a dimple lurked near its corner. Her round, pink chin turned up; that had its dimple too. After a moment, he decided to speak to her — to tell her that he was Gordon Morse, the botanist, collecting for the Academy. He only cleared his throat a time or two and asked meekly:

"What are you going to do?"

"Keep you till my cousin comes," she answered, without turning. "If you try to come out, I shall shoot!"

He laughed; the girl and the gun were incongruous. "If you try to come in —" he menaced.

"You needn't be afraid," she retorted. "I know convict's stripes when I see them!"

He glanced at his dress and sobered. "W-hy," he stammered, "it does look like that! They're my — Thunder! I guess I'll have to tell you."

"Don't!" she cried. "I don't care what you did! . . . You didn't — kill any one?"

"Well, hardly! I'm Gordon —"

"I never read who's escaped!" She drew a freer breath and relaxed her grip on the gun. After a while, she ventured, "Did you steal?"

"N-o," he answered, absorbed by the lights in her hair. It was very pretty hair — exactly the kind for a "Mary." If he had on his tramping suit — he meditated, pleasantly, that he looked rather well in that. If they two were on the rock behind

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the big spring, where the giant woodwordias grow — "Good Heavens!" he blurted. "I wish you'd unbolt this door and go home."

She did not seem to hear. "I'm glad it wasn't for stealing," she mused. "I suppose you did something a great deal worse, but it takes such a mean man to steal!"

There were wonderful dapples on her cheek. A tendril of that ripply hair beckoned, and coaxed and — dared. Gordon grew suddenly lonely.

"There's no one to care," he sighed, "if I were steeped neck deep in disgrace."

She turned, half towards him, yet it sounded as if she were talking to herself. "Most of the dreadful things in the world," she philosophized, "are done because people think 'nobody cares.' Somebody does, every time."

"Hum-m," he considered. "Who, for instance?"

"I'm sure I don't know," she answered, stiffly. "Most likely, your mother."

"She died when I was twelve years old."

"Your sister, or — wife?"

"Never had 'em. Go on."

"Well," a little recklessly, "whoever took care of you and brought you up."

"That's nobody. Next?"

There was silence, set into clauses, this time from the girl. The sun blazed down; she began to look wilted.

"Aren't you ever going home?" Gordon demanded. "You haven't had any breakfast."

"I'm dreadfully hungry," she admitted, after a pause.

"So am I," he cried, joyfully, as if he had discovered a choice coincidence.

She laid down the gun; she seemed thinking. The dimple came into play. Presently, she commanded —

"Repeat this after me: I promise . . . on my honor . . . not to force the door . . . if you pass in something to eat."

Gordon obeyed.

When she came back, she slipped a tray to him and refastened the bolt. The tray held bacon, crumpy biscuits, and coffee.

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"But yours," he begged. "Please bring it out to the rock. You know I might — escape."

They did not eat much in spite of the fact that they were hungry. She stared at the blue line of hills; he stared, through the crack, at her. Afterwards, he could not remember how it all began. It seemed the most natural thing in the world to tell her of the forlorn little boy who had been himself,— of the lad who had everything to overcome. He had commenced to tell her of the present man, when she sprang up and fled to the cabin.

She returned to deposit a bundle. The next time she came she led the white pony. There was an odd little choke in her voice.

"I've brought you some of my cousin's clothes," she whispered. "You did'nt steal; I gave them. I'm going to pay it all back. I've brought you four dollars and sixty cents. It was all I could find. Good gracious! Do go before my cousin comes home!"

She unfastened the bolt.

"Comes home?" Gordon echoed. "Comes — HOME?"

The pony was loping down the trail and Dagonet whined at the door.

The next two days Gordon Morse, botanist, searched the country for something which his heart named, "Mary-gold." There was no clue. On the third, a creamy envelope waited in his mail-box, addressed, in his care, to the Court Fool. The note within read:

"DAGONET:

"I haven't the sense of a polywog! I'm ready to die of shame! My cousin, George Warren, lives on the other spur of the mountain. Mother and I came up to surprise him. We stopped at the Ridgeby's; then mother was ill, and I — ?

"Please tell all this to the Wise Man and ask him, if he can, to forgive,

"MARY EMMERSON, the Friend of the Fool."

The next afternoon found Gordon on a rock above the Ridgeby ranch. A primrose offered its dew-cup, but the author of "Fourteen Weeks with Flowers," did not see it. When his courage had germinated, he went to the house.

Miss Emmerson and her mother had gone with the cousin the day before.

Gordon climbed the other spur of the mountain. Miss Emmer-

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son was out. He went five times before he took the Court Fool into council.

"Dagonet," he began, "we've just a week, here, left, and that ravine separates us from — HER. We need her."

He wrote a note and fastened it to the dog's collar.

"DEAR LADY OF MARY'S INN:

"The Court Fool has come to tell you that my work here is finished. The 'contrary old batch' must go back to town. I've taken down the sign-board; wherever my home is, that shall be its name. I've a great deal more to tell you. Please may I not come over and find that Mary's in?

"GORDON MORSE."

That night, he climbed the other spur with Dagonet tugging at an unfamiliar leash. He made his way to the cabin; he fastened the leash to the doorknob.

In the morning, Dagonet returned. He leered knowingly at his master; there was no answering message on his collar.

For three endless days, Gordon waited. On the fourth, another note was in his box, for the Fool. It only said:

"Tell him 'yes.'"

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The Quicksand Terror.*

BY FRANK H. SWEET.

CALLIOPE CATESBY was in his humors again. Ennui was upon him. This goodly promontory, the earth — particularly that portion of it known as Quicksand — was to him no more than a pestilent congregation of vapors. Overtaken by the megrims, the philosopher may seek relief in soliloquy; my lady find solace in tears; the flaccid Easterner scold at the millinery bills of his women folks. Such recourse was insufficient to the denizens of Quicksand. Calliope, especially, was wont to express his ennui according to his lights.

Over night Calliope had hung out signals of approaching low spirits. He had kicked his own dog on the porch of the Occidental Hotel, and refused to apologize. He had become capricious and fault-finding in conversation. While strolling about he reached often for twigs of mesquite and chewed the leaves fiercely. That was always an ominous act. Another symptom, alarming to those who were familiar with the different stages of his doldrums, was his increasing politeness and a tendency to use formal phrases. A husky softness succeeded the usual penetrating drawl in his tones. A dangerous courtesy marked his manners. Later, his smile became crooked, the left side of his mouth slanting upward, and Quicksand got ready to stand from under.

At this stage Calliope generally began to drink. Finally, about midnight, he was seen going homeward, saluting those whom he met with exaggerated but inoffensive courtesy. Not yet was Calliope's melancholy at the danger point. He would seat himself at the window of the room he occupied over Silvester's tonsorial parlors, and there chant lugubrious and tuneless ballads until morning, accompanying the noises by appropriate maltreatment of

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a jingling guitar. More magnanimous than Nero, he would thus give musical warning of the forthcoming municipal unheaval that Quicksand was scheduled to endure.

A quiet, amiable man was Calliope Catesby at other times — quiet to indolence, and amiable to worthlessness. At best he was a loafer and a nuisance, — at worst he was the Terror of Quicksand. His ostensible occupation was something subordinate in the real estate line; he drove the beguiled Easterner in buckboards out to look over lots and ranch property. Originally he came from one of the Gulf States; his lank six feet, slurring rhythm of speech and sectional idioms giving evidence of his birthplace.

And yet, after taking on Western adjustments, this languid pine-box whittler, cracker barrel hugger, shady corner lounger of the cotton fields and sumac hills of the South became famed as a bad man among men who had made life-long study of the art of truculence.

At nine the next morning Calliope was fit. Inspired by his own barbarous melodies and the contents of his jug, he was ready primed to gather fresh laurels from the diffident brow of Quicksand. Encircled and criss-crossed with cartridge belts, abundantly garnished with revolvers, and copiously drunk, he poured forth into Quicksand's main street. Too chivalrous to surprise and capture a town by silent sortie, he paused at the nearest corner and emitted his slogan — that fearful, brassy yell, so reminiscent of the steam piano, that had gained for him the classic appellation that had superseded his own baptismal name. Following close upon his vociferation came three shots from his forty-five by way of limbering up the guns and testing his aim. A yellow dog, the personal property of Colonel Swazey, the proprietor of the Occidental, fell feet upward in the dust with one farewell yelp. A Mexican, who was crossing the street from the Blue Front grocery, carrying in his hand a bottle of kerosene, was stimulated to a sudden and admirable burst of speed, still grasping the neck of the shattered bottle. The new gilt weathercock on Judge Riley's lemon and ultra-marine two-story residence shivered, flapped and hung by a splinter, the sport of the wanton breezes.

The artillery was in trim. Calliope's hand was steady. The

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high, calm ecstacy of habitual battle was upon him, though slightly embittered by the sadness of Alexander in that his conquests were limited to the small world of Quicksand.

Down the street went Calliope, shooting right and left. Glass fell like hail; dogs vamosed; chickens flew, squawking; feminine voices shrieked concernedly to youngsters at large. The din was perforated at intervals by the *staccato* of the Terror's guns, and was drowned periodically by the brazen speech that Quicksand knew so well. The occasions of Calliope's low spirits were legal holidays in Quicksand. All along the main street, in advance of his coming, clerks were putting up shutters and closing doors. Business would languish for a space. The right of way was Calliope's, and as he advanced, observing the dearth of opposition and the few opportunities for distraction, his ennui perceptibly increased.

But, some four squares farther down, lively preparations were being made to minister to Mr. Catesby's love for interchange of compliments and repartee. On the previous night numerous messengers had hastened to advise Buck Patterson, the city marshal, of Calliope's impending eruption. The patience of that official, often strained in extending leniency toward the disturber's misdeeds, had been overtaxed. In Quicksand some indulgence was accorded the natural ebullition of human nature. Providing that the lives of the more useful citizens were not recklessly squandered, or too much property needlessly laid waste, the community sentiment was against a too strict enforcement of the law. But Calliope had raised the limit. His outbursts had been too frequent and too violent to come within the classification of a normal and sanitary relaxation of spirit.

Buck Patterson had been expecting and awaiting in his little ten by twelve frame office that preliminary yell announcing that Calliope was feeling blue. When the signal came, the City Marshal rose to his feet and buckled on his "sidekickers." Two deputy sheriffs and three citizens who had proved the edible qualities of fire also stood up, ready to bandy with Calliope leaden jocularities.

"Gather that fellow in," said Buck Patterson, setting forth the lines of the campaign. "Don't have no talk, but shoot as soon

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as you can get a show. Keep behind cover and bring him down. He's a no-good 'un. It's up to Calliope to turn up his toes this time, I reckon. Go to him all spraddled out, boys. And don't git too reckless, for what Calliope shoots at he hits."

Buck Patterson, tall, muscular and solemn-faced, with his bright "City Marshal" badge shining on the breast of his blue flannel shirt, gave his posse directions for the onslaught upon Calliope. The plan was to accomplish the downfall of the Quicksand Terror without loss to the attacking party, if possible.

The splenetic Calliope, unconscious of retributive plots, was steaming down the channel, cannonading on either side, when he suddenly became aware of breakers ahead. The city marshal and one of the deputies rose up behind some dry-goods boxes half a square to the front, and opened fire. At the same time the rest of the posse, divided, shelled him from two side-streets, up which they were cautiously maneuvering from a well-executed détour.

The first volley broke the lock of one of Calliope's guns, cut a neat underbit in his right ear and exploded a cartridge in his crossbelt, scorching his ribs as it burst. Feeling braced up by this unexpected tonic to his spiritual depression, Calliope executed a fortissimo note from his upper register, and returned the fire like an echo. The upholders of the law dodged at his flash, but a trifle too late to save one of the deputies a bullet just above the elbow and the marshal a bleeding cheek from a splinter that a ball tore from the box he had ducked behind.

And now Calliope met the enemy's tactics in kind. Choosing with a rapid eye the street from which the weakest and least accurate fire had come, he invaded it at a double-quick, abandoning the unprotected middle of the street. With rare cunning the opposing force in that direction — one of the deputies and two of the valorous volunteers — waited, concealed by beer barrels, until Calliope had passed their retreat, and then peppered him from the rear. In another moment they were reinforced by the marshal and his other men, and then Calliope felt that in order to successfully prolong the delights of the controversy he must find some means of reducing the great odds against him. His eyes fell upon a structure that seemed to hold out this promise, providing he could reach it.

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Not far away was the little railroad station, its building a strong box house, ten by twenty feet, resting upon a platform four feet above ground. Windows were in each of its walls. Something like a fort it might become to a man thus sorely pressed by superior numbers.

Calliope made a bold and rapid spurt for it, the marshal's crowd "smoking" him as he ran. He reached the haven in safety, the station agent leaving the building by a window, like a flying squirrel, as the garrison entered the door.

Patterson and his supporters halted under protection of a pile of lumber and held consultations. In the station was an unterrified desperado, who was an excellent shot and carried an abundance of ammunition. For thirty yards on each side of the besieged was a stretch of bare, open ground. It was a sure thing that the man who attempted to enter that unprotected area would be stopped by one of Calliope's bullets.

The city marshal was resolved. He had decided that Calliope Catesby should no more wake the echoes of Quicksand with his strident whoop. He had so announced. Officially and personally he felt imperatively bound to put the soft pedal on that instrument of discord. It played bad tunes.

Standing near was a hand truck used in the manipulation of small freight. It stood by a shed full of sacked wool, a consignment from one of the sheep ranches. On this truck the marshal and his men piled three heavy sacks of wool. Stooping low, Buck Patterson started for Calliope's fort, slowly pushing this loaded truck before him for protection. The posse, scattering broadly, stood ready to nip the besieged in case he should show himself in an effort to repel the juggernaut of justice that was creeping upon him. Only once did Calliope make demonstration. He fired from a window, and some tufts of wool spurted from the marshal's trustworthy bulwark. The return shots from the posse pattered against the window frame of the fort. No loss resulted on either side.

The marshal was too deeply engrossed in steering his protected battleship to be aware of the approach of the morning train until he was within only a few feet of the platform. The train was coming up on the other side of it. It stopped only one minute

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at Quicksand. What an opportunity it would offer to Calliope! He had only to step out the other door, mount the train, and away.

Abandoning his breastworks, Buck, with his gun ready, dashed up the steps and into the room, driving open the closed door with one heave of his weighty shoulder. The members of the posse heard one shot fired inside, and then there was silence.

. . . . . .

At length the wounded man opened his eyes. After a blank space he could again see and hear, and feel, and think. Turning his eyes about, he found himself lying on a wooden bench. A tall man with a perplexed countenance, wearing a big badge with "City Marshal" engraved upon it, stood over him. A little old woman in black, with a wrinkled face and black sparkling eyes, was holding a wet handkerchief against one of his temples. He was trying to get these facts fixed in his mind and connected with past events when the old woman began to talk.

"There now, great, big, strong man! That bullet never tetched ye! Jest skeeted along the side of your head and sort of paralyzed ye for a spell. I've heerd of sech things afore; con-cussion is what they names it. Abel Wadkins used to kill squirrels that way — barkin' 'em, Abe called it. You jest been barked, sir, and you'll be all right in a little bit. Feel lots better already, don't ye? You just lay still a while longer and let me bathe your head. You don't know me, I reckon, and 'tain't surprisin' that you shouldn't. I come in on that train from Alabama to see my son. Big son, ain't he? Lands! you wouldn't hardly think he'd ever been a baby, would ye? This is my son, sir."

Half turning, the old woman looked up at the standing man, her worn face lighting with a proud and wonderful smile. She reached out one veined and calloused hand and took one of the man's. Then smiling cheerily down at the patient, she continued to dip the handkerchief in the waiting-room tin wash basin and gently apply it to his temple. She had the benevolent garrulity of old age.

"I ain't seen my son before," she continued, "in eight years. One of my nephews, Elkanah Price, he's a conductor on one of them railroads, and he got me a pass to come out here. I can stay a whole week on it, and then it'll take me back ag'in. Jest

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think, now, that little boy of mine has got to be a officer — a city marshal of a whole town. That's somethin' like a constable, ain't it? I never knowed he was a officer; he didn't say nothin' about it in his letters. I reckon he thought his old mother'd be skeered about the danger he was in. But, laws! I never was much of a hand to git skeered. 'Tain't no use. I heard them guns a-shootin' while I was gittin' off them cars, and I see smoke a-comin' out of the depot, but I jest walked right along. Then I see son's face lookin' out through the window. I knowed him at oncet. He met me at the door, and squeezed me most to death. And there you was, sir, a-lying there jest like you was dead, and I 'lowed we'd see what might be done to help sot you up."

"I think I'll sit up now," said the concussion patient. "I'm feeling pretty fair by this time."

He sat, somewhat weakly yet, leaning against the wall. He was a rugged man, big-boned and straight. His eyes, steady and keen, seemed to linger upon the face of the man standing so still above him. His look wandered often from the face he studied to the marshal's badge upon the other's breast.

"Yes, yes, you'll be all right," — said the old woman, patting his arm, "if you don't get to cuttin' up agin, and havin' folks shootin' at you. Son told me about you, sir, while you was layin' senseless on the floor. Don't you take it as meddlesome fer an old woman with a son as big as you to talk about it. And you mustn't hold no grudge ag'in my son for havin' to shoot at ye. A officer has got to take up for the law — it's his duty — and them that acts bad and lives wrong has to suffer. Don't blame my son any, sir — 'tain't his fault. He's always been a good boy — good when he was growin' up, and kind and 'bedient and well-behaved. Won't you let me advise you, sir, not to do so no more? Be a good man, and leave liquor alone and live peaceably and godly. Keep away from bad company, work honest, sleep sweet."

The black-mittened hand of the old pleader gently touched the breast of the man she addressed. Very earnest and candid her old, worn face looked. In her rusty black dress and antique bonnet she sat, near the close of a long life, and epitomized the experience of the world. Still the man she spoke to gazed above her head, contemplating the silent son of the old mother.

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"What does the marshal say?" he asked. "Does he believe the advice is good? Suppose the marshal speaks up and says if the talk's all right!"

The tall man moved uneasily. He fingered the badge on his breast for a moment, and then he put an arm around the old woman and drew her close to him. She smiled the unchanging mother smile of three-score years, and patted his big brown hand with her crooked, mittened fingers while her son spake.

"I say this," he said, looking squarely into the eyes of the other man, "that if I was in your place I'd follow it. If I was a drunken, desp'rate character, without shame or hope, I'd follow it. If I was in your place and you was in mine I'd say: "Marshal, I'm willin' to swear if you'll give me the chance I'll quit the racket. I'll drop the tanglefoot and the gun play, and won't play hoss no more. I'll be a good citizen and go to work and quit my foolishness. So help me God! That's what I'd say to you if you was marshal and I was in your place."

"Hear my son talkin'," said the old woman softly. "Hear him, sir. You promise to be good and he won't do you no harm. Forty-one year ago his heart first beat ag'in' mine, and it's beat true ever since."

The other man rose to his feet, trying his limbs and stretching his muscles.

"Then," said he, "if you was in my place and said that, and I was marshal, I'd say: 'Go free, and do your best to keep your promise.'"

"Lawsy!" exclaimed the old woman, in a sudden flutter, "ef I didn't clear forget that trunk of mine! I see a man settin' it on the platform jest as I seen son's face in the window, and it went plum out of my head. There's eight jars of home-made quince jam in that trunk that I made myself. I wouldn't have nothin'-happen to them jars for a red apple."

Away to the door she trotted, spry and anxious, and then Calliope Catesby spoke out to Buck Patterson:

"I just couldn't help it, Buck. I seen her through the window a-comin' in. She never had heard a word 'bout my tough ways. I didn't have the nerve to let her know I was a worthless cuss bein' hunted down by the community. There you was, lyin'

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where my shot laid you, like you was dead. The idea struck me sudden, and I just took your badge off and fastened it on to myself, and I fastened my reputation on to you. I told her I was the marshal and you was a holy terror. You can take your badge back now, Buck."

With shaking fingers Calliope began to unfasten the disc of metal from his shirt.

"Easy there!" said Buck Patterson. "You keep that badge right where it is, Calliope Catesby. Don't you dare to take it off till the train your mother leaves on is out of sight. You'll be city marshal of Quicksand as long as she's here to know it. After I stir around town a bit and put 'em on I'll guarantee that nobody won't give the thing away to her. And say, you leather-headed, rip-roarin', low-down son of a locoed cyclone, you follow that advice she give me! I'm goin' to take some of it myself too."

"Buck," said Calliope feelingly, "ef I don't, I hope I may—"

"Shut up," said Buck suddenly, "She's a-comin' back."

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The Desert — and a Man.*

BY F. W. LUENING.

VEN the trail was gone. Only a line of telegraph poles remained, bleached yellow-white — as dry and dead as the land about them. Two wire threads flashed heat from pole to pole and quivered strangely. Stifling dust clouds settled on the teams, and the yellow wagons assumed the color of their freight — cement for the most. Men swore wearily as the caravan followed the metallic line. A sun-baked riverbed crossed their way. They stopped. From out of the bed protruded an iron pump and near it lay a crude trough of planks. So they found Cheepetah — The Well of Lost Water.

Four men watched the empty wagons disappear in the dust. A line of cement sacks marked Cheepetah, a pile of lumber and a tent. The four turned to work, for the sun beat upon them mercilessly. They erected a flimsy shed. It offered shade, and they rested. Under a cliff that towered sheer they pitched the tent. Then ate of canned beef and sank to weary, exhausted slumber. And the moon shone on the desert and the coyotes howled.

They awoke to days of toil. Sheltered from the burning rays they labored under their shed — moulding hollow blocks of cement. These they ranged neatly in long rows under a blazing sun — then staggered back to their refuge to curse and toil again. As the rows of finished blocks grew long the pile of cement sacks dwindled. So the four watched the line of telegraph poles. But the expected — the string of yellow, dust-covered wagons — did not come. The last of the cement sacks emptied, they waited. The rest was good. They smoked calmly under the shed. Heat waves simmered without and lizards played on the rocks. Within was drowsy peace and they sprawled on the sands, content.

The fiery disk of red sank into the western ledges. They sought

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the tent. The canned beef was gone, so they ate dried prunes. There was flour, and they baked biscuits. Then slept. A mountain rat came slyly out of the night. The glittering tin spoons fascinated. It nosed among them eagerly, upsetting the can with a crash. The Man stirred uneasily and the rat fled. It returned warily, later on. When the four awoke two spoons were gone — and the dried-up prunes. They drank coffee and finished the last of the oatmeal — then smoked — and waited — under the shed. The day passed idly away. Only the lizards stirred and a buzzard — high above.

The rat came again when they slept. It carried away another spoon. It found the flour and feasted freely. In the morning they had coffee and six biscuits between them, then returned to their vigil. No wagons came. The inactivity wore on their tempers and they quarrelled. There was only coffee for supper. They quarrelled more bitterly that night, then slept restlessly.

The Man heard the mountain rat rattle the spoon. He followed it out into the night — then forgot it. He bowed his head in his hands.

"God," he whispered, "it'll be hard to die — in such company."

Restless breathing came from the tent. Someone stirred and muttered oaths. The Man gulped. He arose and went to the pump. The iron handle lifted lightly and dropped clanging on to its rest. The valves offered no resistance. The Well of Lost Water was dry!

"It'll come sooner, now," he muttered dispassionately. He sat down on the empty well and slept.

With the morning came Thirst. Three men dug frantically in the well. The Man remained calm. He sat under the shed and smoked. The three labored long, but found no trace of moisture. Then they quarrelled fiercely — and fought. Unreasonable, brutish anger ruled them. Fear awoke the beast. The sun drove them to shelter, so they sank exhausted under the flimsy roof and glared at the telegraph poles. Nothing came. The sun shone cruelly and the sandstone ledges and the cactus quivered in the heat.

That evening they chewed coffee beans. There was no water. The Man shunned the tent. He lay down among the rocks. His

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parched throat kept him awake. When he slept, feverishly, moaning a little, he dreamed. A coyote howled dismally, very near. He stirred, awoke, and stared hopelessly into the starlit skies above him. His eyes burned and his lips felt hot and cracked.

Only one man sat under the shed next day. He chewed an empty pipe. Near him lay three Things. Gaunt, haggard Things, that scanned the line of poles with glittering, animal eyes. Fear shone in the eyes — a restless, haunting fear. The Things watched one another furtively. They cursed thickly now and again and fought — blindly, causelessly — when the slow coming of the Desert Death goaded them to desperate, insane activity. Then they glowered at the Man — intently, wolfishly. Snakelike they edged nearer — nearer.

The Man saw the distant ledges tremble in the heat. He saw a ripple of water fleck the sandstone. Spreading, a river of blue flowed gently. It touched the parched hills. A mat of green o'erspread them. Trees grew, and there came people. Great crowds of people, who cheered wildly, and flaunted colored banners. A boat appeared. A long, narrow, tapering boat, that cut into the waters and sped swiftly — all too swiftly. Bare-armed figures rowed with the regularity and precision of a machine. Oars flashed beautifully in the sun. Then, strangely, the Man felt every nerve a-tingle. Vaguely he knew he must fight — fight hard. He felt the sun strike his bare arms and shoulders. The desert sun. No — the — the — why, the sun that shone on the Hudson — of course. He panted. He strained every muscle. Suddenly he heard a voice. It was counting — sharply, decisively! "One, two! one, two! Hit 'er up! Take the stroke! One, two!"

The Man bent to his task — his oar flew. He heard the gurgle of the water. He must win — they must win. His 'Varsity — his crew. They were gaining — gaining. Out of one corner of his eye he saw the other boat; two flashing oars, then three; then four; then only three again. The Man gasped. How hot it was — how dry his throat! He wanted so to drink — drink — of that cool, blue water. But he couldn't — he couldn't. He must row — they must win. Suddenly they forged ahead. He heard a crash and a rending of wood. He saw the other boat strike

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something — go to pieces on a rock — a sandbar — a ledge. The river sank into the dust and the green died out of the hills.

The Man stared stupidly at his hands. He felt faint — sick. Three Things lay under the shed. They cursed and wept hysterically and grovelled at his feet. Bruised, bleeding, beaten Things, with battered heads and delirious, hunted eyes.

A hard, dry sob shook the Man. He staggered out into the blinding light — fell — and staggered on. Then crawled painfully over the scorched sands. Trembling frightfully he drew himself up. He clawed at a pole — a telegraph pole. Weakly he held himself in upright position. He babbled thickly.

"Love — life — a Man — no quitter — fight," then shook off his delirium and tried to think.

"Wires," he muttered, "help — save them."

He looked up at the threads of steel above him. They were very low — just out of reach. He stretched up an arm, then fell heavily and rolled into the dry riverbed. And night came and the stars.

A coyote circled warily around the inert body. It approached, sniffed uneasily, and scratched in the baked sand; then dug quickly down — down.

The Man stirred. The coyote fled and howled dolefully in the moonlight. The Man, moaning miserably, dragged himself on.

"No quitter — fight — wires," he whispered, then pitched forward in sudden weakness. His head hung over the hole where the coyote had scratched. His neck muscles relaxed. His seared lips touched the sand. It was moist and cool! Desperate, despairing energy came upon him. He clawed the wet earth into his mouth, he sucked every little, life-giving drop from the gritty, alkaline soil — then clawed again and grovelled, his face in the mud. Bye and bye reason returned and strength. The Man scooped out handfuls of the saturated sand and drank greedily — but sanely.

He arose. With infinite, patient, heart-breaking toil he built a pyramid of stones. From its top he could just touch the wires. Another stone and another. He mounted his pile laboriously, swayed dizzily and clutched — blindly, wildly — at the steel line above him. His fingers closed convulsively. Then he lurched

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forward — and the wire snapped off short. Minutes passed — hours — ages. The Man lay exhausted, breathing weakly. Another struggle and he regained his feet. He remounted the pyramid. The other wire snapped. And he fell and lay very still.

. . . . . .

The government mule-teams left the fort. Four troopers scanned the telegraph line carefully. Fifty, sixty, seventy miles, and they found the break — and the Man. Cool, wet sand was in his hands and he tottered to the shed, unseeing. The Things scarcely breathed. He pressed the sand to their lips. Carefully, methodically he passed from one to the next. Then sought the riverbed again to bring more sand. The troopers stopped him, gently.

"No," he murmured. He reeled. "No — must save them — no quitter — fight — win." And he sank limply into their arms.

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Parkinson's Lightning Calculator.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

N the old St. Kilda road, a few miles outside of Melbourne, the queen city of Australia, stands "Parkinson's Palace." It is the most unique establishment of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Globe-trotters whose names are on the registers of The Savoy in London, Shepheard's at Cairo, Watson's at Bombay, and many other famous hostelries on the world's broad breast, are startled out of that indifference born of travel when they enter Parkinson's hotel — or rather the magnificently appointed bar-room, which is the chief attraction. The place has distinction and originality. Parkinson had an idea, and in the building of The Palace he saw that the idea was carried out.

The first object that strikes the eye of the visitor is a stuffed crow that directs a lifelike stare upon the crowds that throng the bar. The bird is a magnet. It looks out from a gorgeous case of polished gold quartz, studded with Queensland fire-opals and New Zealand greenstone, and immediately rivets attention. This crow has a history, and in a country where the species is universally hated, the fact that one should be stuffed and elaborately encased leads to a continual repetition of the story. As every Australian regards the crow as the most deadly and despised foe of the sheep-breeder, native visitors to the hotel look upon this specimen, with its glistening diamond eyes, as a personal insult, until the proprietor has explained that this crow was an exception — the one solitary exception on the entire island continent that brought prosperity instead of desolation and disaster.

Parkinson was a small sheep farmer on the Gippsland hills till the drought of 1891 swept over the land. That year put him out of business. The crows feasted on his dead and dying sheep,

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fire swept through his pasture, and, finally, the bank seized his property on account of an overdue mortgage. Included in the few head of stock taken over with the farm, was a thoroughbred colt, upon which Parkinson set great hopes, so his ruin was complete. The unfortunate man's wife died from the shock of the disaster, leaving him to care for the only child, a girl of six.

It was shortly after his wife's death that Parkinson got an idea. Some weeks before, one of the stockmen had brought the lonely child a young crow to play with, and Parkinson, hating the bird with all the true bushman's hate, decided to kill it before leaving the sheep run. But fate intervened. An attachment had sprung up between the child and the bird. The crow's cunning capers, of which it never tired, greatly amused the little girl, and while Parkinson watched the two playing in the shadow of the homestead, an inspiration came. He packed the bird up with his few belongings and removed to the nearest township.

Three months afterwards his name became a household word among the farmers on the bronzed plains. Parkinson appeared at the small agricultural shows, race meetings, and dog exhibitions, and he startled the natives by giving performances in which a tame crow was the shining star. *The bird was a lightning calculator of the first water.*

The bushmen know well that the crow possesses ten times more cunning than any other bird, but they were not prepared for the exhibition of intelligence given them by Parkinson's pet. Its feats astounded them. The extraordinary ability it displayed in dealing with figures left them speechless. They had heard of horses that had been trained to distinguish between numerals. but a crow that could juggle with figures like the actuary of a life insurance company was something new in their experience of life. Gippsland gasped. Men rode fifty miles from the ranges to see the marvel, and went away amazed.

Two months after the crow made its début, its fa[illegible] When spread so rapidly that Parkinson refused a score of [illegible]y the bird the proprietors of circuses and music halls, [illegible]armaduke Erthat he could successfully manage his own [illegible]f thread from a the larger cities, he hired a theatre in Me[illegible] started to roll in upon him.

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The Calculating Crow took the town by storm. Its feats were marvellous. It revelled in figures. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division seemed to be the joy of its life, and the people came in thousands to view the marvel.

By nodding its head smartly the bird invariably gave the correct result to the sums, no matter how difficult, that were placed before it on a blackboard. Thus, if the answer to a sum was two hundred and thirty-seven, the crow would nod twice, pause a moment, then nod three times, and after another little interval give seven smart bobs of its shiny black head. It made no mistakes. Parkinson acted as interlocutor, and standing at the blackboard encouraged the audience to call out sums of all kinds, which he chalked upon the board to be worked out by the feathered prodigy.

Even in mental arithmetic the crow's skill was remarkable. The boy who wanted to know the cost of two dozen apples at two pence half-penny each, received his reply offhand in five quick nods to signify five shillings, and more intricate problems were disposed of in the same fashion. The bird also gave the dates of the most important events in the world's history. By a single nod, eight nods, one nod, and then five, it told the date of the Battle of Waterloo, and answered in like manner questions concerning the discovery of Australia, the accession of Queen Victoria and matters of a like nature.

The city of Melbourne went wild over the crow. The performance was unique. Statesmen, school teachers, lawyers and divines came to see and wonder, and the press was flooded by writers who argued lengthily concerning the opinion of different ornithologists who had written upon the brain power of birds. Doctors examined the size and shape of the feathered calculator's head when it was not busy figuring out the answers to the thousands of questions put by the big audiences, and they declared that the bird had a brain that was abnormally developed. Parkinson became the one topic of conversation. Thousands of people were brought to see the bird, and the fame of the calculator spread across the continent. Parkinson thought over the drought days on the strange ways of Fate. Crows

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had helped to ruin him by plucking the eyes out of his starving sheep, and yet a single crow had now brought him affluence!

Then something happened. The Governor of the colony wished to witness the performance, and in company with his aides-de-camp he attended Parkinson's theatre. Parkinson was delighted. The Governor was the representative of royalty, and his visit was a distinct honor to the show.

Shortly after the performance began it became apparent that the crow was in a bad humor. It bobbed its head sullenly when answering questions put by the audience, and Parkinson, by gently stroking and patting the bird, tried vainly to put it in its usual happy mood. But the performer became more irritable as the minutes went by.

When the Governor intimated that he wished to propound a question, the house was instantly hushed. He was a small, stout personage, and when he rose and looked straight at the crow, the latter returned the stare. Parkinson, detecting a look of annoyance in the bird, breathed heavily as the exalted one propounded his problem.

"If — er — fourteen bananas cost one shilling and two pence," stammered the pompous dignitary, "how much will one banana cost?"

His Excellency sat down but the crow made no movement. It stared at the questioner as if it had been suddenly petrified. Parkinson, standing on one side of the stage, mopped the perspiration from his forehead and looked around uneasily. It was evident that something was wrong. The small boys in the gallery began to make remarks, which led to an uproar. Suddenly the crow started to pick violently at its right leg, and Parkinson made frantic signals to lower the curtain. The last glimpse the audience got of the performing crow showed them that feathered marvel rolling over and over and picking madly at something they could not see.

It was a *Herald* reporter who discovered the secret. When he dashed behind the stage to discover the reason why the bird had refused to answer the question put by Lord Marmaduke Errington, he found Parkinson cutting a piece of thread from a dead crow's leg.

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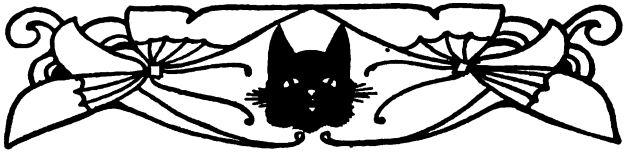
"You can tell the world now," muttered Parkinson. "The crow is dead and I'm not going to the trouble to train another."

And so it happened that the *Herald* of the next morning contained this paragraph:

> A piece of thread tied round the bird's leg and held by a man in the wings, who could see the blackboard and hear each question, was the simple solution of the mystery. The crow had been trained to bob its head each time the thread was pulled. That His Excellency's question remained unanswered was due to the fact that the thread had become tangled round the bird's toes and it refused to respond to the usual signal.

But Luck did not forsake Parkinson. He found that the colt that he had been forced to part with when he lost his farm was entered in the Melbourne Cup, the richest purse in the world, and he determined to back him heavily. Glenloth started at fifty to one, carrying two thousand pounds of the fortune made by the crow, and the year 1892, when that brilliant outsider ran away from his field, will never be forgotten at Flemington. Parkinson built The Palace out of his winnings, sent his daughter to Europe to be educated, and settled down to a life of ease. But he honored the dead crow. And that is why the bird that had the distinction of being questioned by the representative of royalty sits in its gorgeous case and with its diamond eyes surveys the thirsty tourists that come from all parts of the globe. It is the only protected crow in Australia — the only crow that ever brought money instead of ruin to a woolgrower.



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After Many Days.*

BY ROBERT COOKE BICKNELL.

THROUGH the fields, fast browning under the October sun, a boy of fifteen trudged despondently. A light rifle of the muzzle-loading type was across his shoulder, a string of squirrels trailed behind.

Reaching the fence by the roadside, he climbed upon the topmost rail and, on this precarious perch, proceeded to charge his piece anew. A thimbleful of black powder first, the last charge of a half pound that had cost three dollars in Confederate money at the country store. While this was a high price, no doubt, yet it was not so high as it seems — for the value of Confederate money was problematical in the fall of '64. Next, a small flattened bullet, the last in the pouch. Lead had long since become unobtainable. Then the pewter spoons in the kitchen had gone to shoot squirrels and snipe, and this was the last of a broken silver spoon which he had surreptitiously obtained and melted with much difficulty in the old iron ladle, and cast in the moulds that looked so much like a pair of old-fashioned candle snuffers. Indeed, the last one had not melted completely and was scant in measure, so that on the side from which the neck should have projected was a flattened surface on which could be plainly seen a little laureled crown, the hall-mark of the maker. The placing of a percussion-cap upon the nipple completed the process of re-loading, and for a time he sat, his rifle across his knees — looking down the dusty country road.

There presently emerged from the woodland, half a mile away, a most unusual spectacle. A dozen horses showed first from their enveloping cloud of dust, and following, came long lines of marching men, in dust-covered blue uniforms. Although he had never seen a Yankee soldier before in his life, the boy knew, at

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once, that this was a part of the great Union army of which he had lately heard so much. With instinctive caution he drew himself into the overhanging branches of a tree and watched with eager eyes the approaching procession. First passed the mounted officers, then long lines of foot soldiers, followed by several field pieces and a number of lumbering ammunition wagons — all raising such a cloud of dust that he was well nigh stifled on his perch in the tree.

When all had gone and he was concluding that he might safely descend, two men in nondescript garb — camp-followers evidently — came slouching along and paused in the shade of the very tree in which the boy was hiding.

"It was about here somewhere," one of the men was saying, "A farmhouse near the road, a likely looking bay colt grazing in the lot and a pretty woman on the porch," and he looked meaningly at the other and laughed, — a harsh, sneering laugh.

The boy grasped the little rifle tightly and his face flushed hotly. What right had these rough men to mention thus his mother — his modest, dainty mother? For his home was the only house near the road for miles, and his own bay colt was loose in the lot by the house, while his mother habitually sat in the mornings on the wide porch fronting the road.

Without having said more, the men moved on, but the boy had heard enough. As soon as the men were out of sight he dropped down and hurried, by a way he well knew, which would bring him to the back of the house.

He had need to hurry, for the men were already at the house when he came up.

One had skilfully caught the horse and was in the act of fastening a saddle on his back, while the other, the spokesman under the tree, was bowing low in mock courtesy before the boy's mother, who stood in the doorway, pale and frightened, but resolutely barring the way to the ruffian who was seeking to enter the house.

"With your kind permission," he was saying, "We will dine with you today. Then we will take a look at the silver, and surely so fair a lady — " he broke off, to take a leering look into her face, stooping slightly, which proceeding the lady so resented that she gave him a slap fair on his cheek that turned him half round.

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At this instant the boy vaulted the fence and cried "Mother," raising his rifle as he lighted on his feet. The man, seeing this, ran, and, with one bound, landed astride the astonished horse behind his comrade, who was already mounted in the saddle. The horse was moving briskly by this time, and the two were almost around the corner of a little wood when the boy reached the front of the house. Without hesitating, however, he took aim at the man behind and fired. As the horse turned the corner, the boy saw the two men leaning far over — the one in front supporting his companion. Turning, he was just in time to catch his mother, who fell, fainting, in his arms. When she regained consciousness, a few moments afterward, the boy was sobbing violently.

"I am all right now, my boy," she said, patting his cheek as he bent over her. "But it isn't only that," he said, between sobs, "I am afraid I killed the man." So much did he dread the confirmation of his fear that he carefully avoided going near the corner of the wood around which the men had disappeared.

The next day they went away to the North, he and his mother, and before they returned, five years had passed. The war was over, and the period of reconstruction was well nigh passed. Realizing the needs of the prostrate South, the boy, now a young man of twenty, had come, after only one term at the Medical College, to practise for a year or two under his father's tuition, while he accumulated sufficient money to defray the expenses of another year at college — a common custom in those days.

"You will need to study too," his father had told him, after the day's rest from the journey was over, "and all my anatomical specimens were destroyed in the fire which the tramps following Sherman's army kindled in my office about the time you went away."

"With all the skeletons lying scattered throughout the country just now, it should be easy to find one for your study," he added, a little grimly.

"I kin gib him a Yankee's skull, ef dat will do," said an old darky, who had remained faithfully with the old Doctor during all these years, and who, from having associated with them, as it were, in the Doctor's office, had lost much of the darky's fear of skeletons.

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"And where did you get such a thing?" asked the young man.

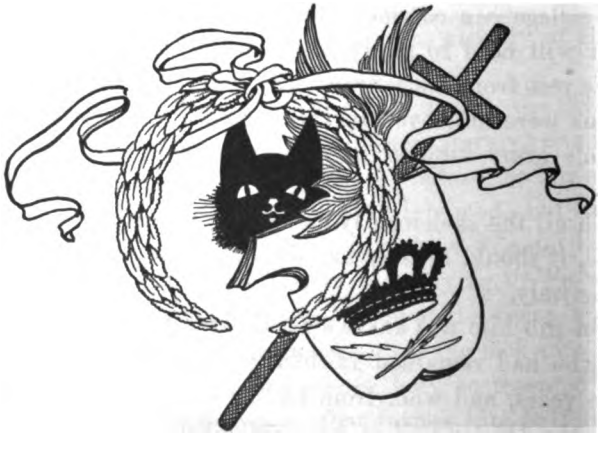
"I foun' hit in de woods by de big road jist beyan' de house, more'n a year ago," the darky explained, and in spite of his added years, and the time which had elapsed, the young man felt some of the dread which had so oppressed him on the day before his departure, five years before.

"Bring it to me then," he said shortly, and in a few minutes he held in his hands a skull, bleached on one side and stained on the other, showing that it had lain long upon the ground, the upper side exposed to the sun.

In one of the bones of the left side, just behind the opening for the ear, was a small, round hole; on the other side was no corresponding opening.

"Must be inside," he muttered to himself, "or may have dropped out."

With a small chisel he pried off the fan-shaped temporal bone from the left side, the interlocking sutures resisting strongly the efforts of his nervous hands. Finally it was released from the tenacious grasp of the last stubborn serration, and turning the skull so that the light fell full on the opposite side of the interior, he saw, wedged into the inner table of that part of the skull nearly corresponding to the right temple, a small, flattened bullet, and plainly to be seen on its surface was a little laureled crown.



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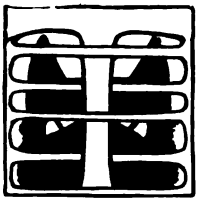
The Resurrection of Peter.*

BY GEORGE HENRY ELLERTON.



HE old man with the bent shoulders hobbled through the gate of the penitentiary and followed the officer into the warden's room. There he stood staring helplessly round till the man at the desk stopped writing and looked up inquiringly.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

The visitor started nervously.

"It's about my son," he murmured; "he's in here."

There was a moment's silence, the prison official evidently thinking that his visitor would continue, but the old man hung his head and remained quiet.

"What is his name?" asked the warden.

The ancient straightened himself up and looked squarely at his questioner.

"His real name is Peter Halsbury," he replied, "but he ain't in here under his real name. Look, mister, it's like this. Peter was the best boy that ever lived, but he loved a girl, an' when she went back on him he jest got a little wild. You know, mister, a lot of young fellers do that. But he's a good boy."

The warden nodded. He had heard the same story many times, but he had sympathy to spare for the old man who tried to shield his son.

"It was jest that girl goin' back on him," repeated the visitor. "Pete was a straight 'un up till then. He had a heart bigger'n any boy around the place, an' he wasn't afraid of much. Then as I told you he went wild a bit, an' I hear as he got into this box. Young Dud Peters told me he was here, an' Dud knows."

The warden pulled the heavy register towards him and looked over the pages.

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"There is no Peter Halsbury in here," he said.

The old man moved closer.

"No, I told you he wouldn't be here under his right name. But he's here all right, an' I jest wish I could see him. See, mister, it's like this. I'm jest run to the length of my chain, fair petered out, an' I'd like to see the boy 'fore I go west to die. I've come a good way to see him, mister. He's my only son, an' he was a mighty good son up to the time that girl fooled 'im. I'd jest like to shake his hand if it could be fixed. He was a good boy, an' if he knew that his old dad wanted to speak to him he — he —"

The old man's voice died away in a faint whisper, and the warden fumbled nervously with his papers.

"I will make an attempt to find your son," he said, slowly. "If you come back in three hours I might have news for you."

The long lines of convicts were drawn up in front of the workshops before being marched to their cells for their midday meal, when the warden stepped forward and addressed them.

"An old man called here this morning to see his son," he said, quietly. "He thinks it will be his last opportunity of seeing him, as he is very old and is now going west to die. But the son is here under an assumed name, and we cannot locate him. Now I am going to call the man's right name, but before doing so I will give him warning. If he thinks that the fact of his real name being known to the authorities might lead to further prosecution he may keep quiet. If he doesn't, he can see his father who will return to the jail after dinner. The name is Peter Halsbury."

There was a shuffling of many feet along the line when the name was called. Convicts gave sighs of relief and glanced at each other wonderingly. Each man thought that Peter Halsbury, if he was in the long lines, would be a considerable fool if he made himself known, and they nudged one another to express their contempt of the warden's tactics.

"A nice idiot he'd be to own up," murmured a low-browed man in the rear rank, and his companions snickered.

"Peter Halsbury is the name," repeated the warden.

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There was a moment of tense silence, then a broad-shouldered man in the rear rank pushed his way through the line in front, took two steps forward and stood to attention. The warden and the prison officials stared. The prisoner who had stepped forward was known as John Gregory.

"I am Peter Halsbury," he said, quietly. "I would like to speak to my father when he returns."

That afternoon father and son conversed for a short twenty minutes in the visitors' room, but while they were bidding each other an affectionate farewell, the Law was busy. The warden of Entwala penitentiary communicated the fact of the resurrection of Peter Halsbury to the authorities, and those authorities were busy looking up records to see if Peter was wanted for some other offense. And the Law did not seek in vain. Peter Halsbury had slipped twice from the path of virtue, but for the first slip he did not pay a penalty because the Law was not familiar with his whereabouts. Thus it came to pass that the same train that took old Halsbury west to die, carried his son to the county seat to stand his trial for an offense committed two years previous.

The attorney for the people who conducted the prosecution of Peter Halsbury made a brilliant effort in stating the case to the jury. The crowd in the courtroom shuddered as they listened to the remarkable manner in which retribution followed the evildoer.

"This man," cried the attorney, "has been a fugitive from Justice for two years. But Justice is surefooted and tireless, gentlemen. Emerson has said that Crime and Punishment grow upon the one stalk, and the hand that plucks the one will surely gather the other. Halsbury's case is an example. He was an inmate of Entwala penitentiary under the assumed name of Gregory, but by a curious little happening, one of those little incidents that upset the best plans of criminals, his real name became known, and he was dragged to the bar of Justice."

The courtroom applauded the effort of the prosecuting attorney when he took his seat, after demanding a verdict of guilty, but the prisoner sat grim and defiant. The presiding judge asked if

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he had any defense, but he shook his head sadly. An attempt to defend himself seemed a mere waste of words to Peter Halsbury at that moment. The jury retired and in three minutes returned with a verdict of guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

In the little corridor where the sentenced prisoners waited before being conveyed to the jail, an inquisitive officer who had listened to the trial, inquired how the authorities had discovered Halsbury's real name, and the prisoner told the story of his father's visit.

"I don't mind the four years," he said, "but if my old dad knew I got it through owning up to my right name for the sake of a twenty-minute chat with him, it would about end him."

The officer took out his tobacco pouch and passed some of its contents to the prisoner as they moved forward.

"There's no need to tell you to keep your mouth shut about me giving you this tobacco," he whispered. "You're made of good stuff if you have slipped a cog."

And the heart of Peter Halsbury was comforted much by the assurance.

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Treated by Proxy.*

BY HAROLD EYRE.

HERE was a sudden movement in the little crowd of newsboys, district messengers and youths of no visible occupation, as Horace Ransom's well-known team of bays drew up at the side entrance to his huge dry-goods store. A tall porter in livery opened the door of the carriage, and Ransom descended to the pavement.

For a moment he stood there, facing the expectant crowd that he could not see. Then he thrust his hand into his pocket and flung to right and left the customary handful of coins. Smiling grimly at the familiar sounds of the scuffle which followed, Ransom took the porter's arm and entered the building.

Upon reaching his office, he sent for men in charge of departments and conferred with them. Then his secretary read to him the morning's mail, for Ransom took pride in maintaining, despite his affliction, an active supervision of the great business he had built up.

While he was dictating a letter to a Western manufacturer, the office boy came in to announce a caller.

"Dr. Hoffman, sir."

"Dr. Hoffman?" repeated Ransom.

"That eye man," explained the Secretary, "who wrote you."

Ransom sighed wearily. "Show him in."

An elderly man entered the room, tall, with stooping shoulders, angular and shabbily dressed.

The merchant turned his head towards the visitor, with a movement pathetically like an enquiring glance.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"I have written," began the old man, "asking you to allow me to treat your eyes."

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"I received your letter," said Ransom curtly. "I suppose you have heard about the reward."

The caller was embarrassed. "That is true, but——"

"You needn't be ashamed of it," interrupted Ransom. "A million dollars is a lot of money, and since I offered it, seven years ago, to any man who could restore my sight, a good many people have been after it, from the greatest specialists in the world to the greatest humbugs. But none of them has earned the reward, though I've given them all a fair show."

"Nobody, I understand, has benefited you at all?"

"Not a particle. I've tried about every system of treatment under the sun, from electric vibrations to the violet ray. They tell me it's a disease of the nerve — neurasthenia, they call it, which I suppose is their way of saying they don't know just what it is. Whatever it may be, I'm afraid it is incurable.

"That's what the German doctors told me years ago, but I wouldn't believe it then — I couldn't believe it. It seemed to me that somewhere in the world there *must* be someone who knew more than the others about my particular sort of blindness. So I offered that reward — everybody thought I was crazy as well as blind — and for years afterwards my life was made miserable by people who thought they needed the money.

"I had hopes then, and listened to them all, tried all their systems and let them experiment on me, until I couldn't stand it any longer. No one can imagine what I went through. The physical torture some of them put me to was bad enough, but the way they tricked me and lied to me, filled me with false hopes and tried every dodge to make a profit out of my——"

He stopped and relapsed into silence.

"I trust, sir," said the old man, with dignity, "that you do not class me among those charlatans. My letter, I had hoped, would convince you that I have some standing in my profession. I have studied for many years the diseases of the optic nerve, and I believe I can cure you. If I succeed, you will have your sight again, and I shall have earned the reward. If I fail, you will have lost only the time you give to the treatment. All I ask is an opportunity to see what I can do with your case."

"What is the principle of your treatment?" inquired Ransom,

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"That is something I am not prepared to explain. I could hardly make clear to you in a few moments the results of a lifetime of study."

Ransom was silent.

"Come back at the same hour tomorrow," he said at length. "I have very little faith left, but you shall have your opportunity — if you care to take it on my conditions."

When Dr. Hoffman was shown into Ransom's office the next morning, he found a third person in the room, a dark, thick-set man of about forty.

"Mr. Martin," began Ransom, indicating the dark man, "is afflicted with what the doctors say is precisely the same form of blindness as mine. For some years past I have retained his services, so to speak, to test various systems of treatment that were to restore my sight. I found some such arrangement necessary, for I am too busy a man to give much time to doubtful experiments, and I like to give everything a trial. If it is possible for you to benefit me, it will be evident in your treatment of Mr. Martin; and as soon as you have any success with him, you can begin on me. Now you can suit yourself as to whether you care to undertake the case."

"But," objected Hoffman, "it will probably be some time before——"

"Exactly. That is why I want to see results first."

The other hesitated.

"It's an unusual proposition," he said finally, "to treat a patient by proxy — but I'll do my best."

For several weeks the treatment continued without incident and without apparent result. Martin reported from time to time to his employer, but the latter evinced slight interest in the matter, not even inquiring as to Hoffman's methods. Constant disappointment had left the merchant with little hope.

One morning he was in bad humor when Martin came.

"I don't see the use of wasting any more time on that man," he said irritably. "It's nearly two months now, and he hasn't done you a bit of good."

"He seems confident that he will succeed," replied Martin; "somehow, I'm beginning to have faith in him."

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"What does he do to you?"

"That's what I don't know much about — he doesn't seem to want to explain things. But he uses some kind of rays that he gets from a tube, and he has an apparatus to produce what he calls high frequency vibrations. It has a queer effect. You don't notice anything at the time, but afterwards, quite a while afterwards, your eyes begin to sort of tingle. He says that means the circulation is gradually coming back to the nerve."

"Circulation poppycock!" snapped Ransom. "It's my belief the man's a faker, like the rest of 'em. It's a wonder he hasn't asked me for a loan, or some money on account. It would take just that to convince me."

"I think, sir, he's pretty hard up," ventured Martin; "and after all, he may be on the right track. I suppose you wouldn't feel like helping him out a bit?"

"Not by a jugful! I've done enough foolishness of that kind in the past, and it's time to quit. I'm tired of being an easy mark."

About two weeks after that conversation, Dr. Hoffman called at the merchant's office.

"Mr. Ransom's busy," announced the boy, after taking in the name.

The visitor stood still, apparently taken aback by the message. The boy noticed that he looked thinner and shabbier than when he called before.

"Tell him, please," said the caller, laying his hand nervously on the boy's arm, "that it is urgent. I shall only keep him a moment."

The lad was about to say that it was no use for him to go back, but something in the man's manner disarmed him, and he reentered the private room. Upon emerging, he conducted Hoffman inside.

Ransom's greeting was not cordial.

"Well, Professor," he said, with scornful emphasis on the second word, "I hear you're not having much success with Martin."

"It is a little soon," replied the visitor, "we must have patience. The case is an obstinate one——"

"No more so than mine would be. If you can't cure Martin——"

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"I have not said I can't cure him. I have great expectations. There are signs which lead me to hope for favorable results at any moment."

"Your hopes and expectations don't interest me," was the sharp rejoinder. "I have heard that before, — it is an old story. Have you nothing else to say to me?"

"Yes, there is something else." The visitor's manner became embarrassed. He stammered, and almost guiltily averted his gaze from the other's sightless eyes.

"I hesitate to mention it, but — the expense of the treatment is greater than I anticipated — of course I know I am not entitled to anything unless it is successful, but I am in need — desperate need, and I thought ——".

"No, siree!" thundered Ransom, "not one cent! It's just as I suspected, you're like all the rest of them. But I'll not running a charitable institution, and I haven't lost my wits as well as my eyesight. Enough of this humbug! I shall notify Martin to waste no more ——"

He stopped short in his tirade. The sound of receding footsteps and the opening and shutting of the door told him of his visitor's retreat.

That same day Ransom sent for Martin and informed him that Dr. Hoffman's experiments were at an end.

Thereupon Ransom dismissed the matter from his mind. He thought no more of it until a memorable morning some ten days later when, arriving downtown, he found the porter, for the first time in long years of service, shaken out of his massive dignity.

Without giving his employer a chance to protest, the big negro seized him by the arm and hurried him into the office, muttering something about "a miracl' ob de Lawd, foh shuah!"

Upon entering the room Ransom, with the sharpened faculties of the blind, instantly became aware that a little group of people had gathered there, and his keen perceptions caught the air of expectancy that surrounded him. But he had no inkling of the truth.

Out of the darkness came the voice of his superintendent.

"We have news for you, Mr. Ransom, great news. Martin has recovered his sight!"

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"I don't believe it," said Ransom in a blank voice.

Then he heard Martin himself, incoherent, almost hysterical, telling with unnecessary detail how he had gone to bed the night before with his eyes in their usual state, and in the morning, lo, he could see. And after fourteen years——

Ransom made an effort to control himself.

"That man Hoffman," he ejaculated, as soon as he could find speech, "—when did you see him last?"

"Not since the day he called on you."

"Where does he live?"

"He moved just about that time. He's living now on the East Side, in Fifty-fourth Street."

"Go to him at once!" shouted Ransom. "Take my carriage —bring him back with you. Don't delay a moment!"

After a break-neck drive, the vehicle stopped in front of a squalid house, a few doors east of Third Avenue. Martin dashed up the steps and rang the bell.

Receiving no answer, he rang again. At length a woman came to the door.

"Is Dr. Hoffman here?" he inquired.

She looked at him curiously. "His body's upstairs," she responded, "—third floor back."

"His body!" gasped Martin. "You don't mean——."

He stopped.

"He was found dead," she explained, "yesterday morning."

Martin staggered back. "What was the matter with him?"

The woman slowly surveyed the carriage in the street, and then looked at the white face of the man before her.

"Starvation," she said bitterly, "just plain starvation!"

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The End of the Story.*

BY DONALD MACDONALD.

THE fourth mate, the ship's cook and the yogi sat under an awning on a strip of sandy coast and talked of the sea which had been the cause of half their trouble. At their backs, supporting the awning, stood a meagerly furnished shack, their temporary home. A little to one side, beyond the water's farthest reach, ranged six graves, parallel to the sea and partly shaded by a row of scraggly palms.

Less than a week before a ship had gone down in a storm off the Bahama banks. The mate, the cook and the wise man had escaped in a boat, to be picked up later by a fishing schooner and landed at a Florida town. There had been a fourth sailor, but he had died of the dreaded blue plague soon after reaching port. So his companions had been hurried to the pest house, where they now were, with a hospital orderly who had volunteered to remain by them during the period of incubation and attend them in case they were stricken with the terrible disease.

The mate and the cook were men of only average intelligence, but the yogi had been a person of distinction in the tropical village from which he came. He was a man of intellectual attainments and had shipped in the humble capacity of captain's servant in order to see the world and add to his store of knowledge.

The sun had gone down in the stunted scrub oaks and the air grew chill. The three men moved inside the shack and drew up to the table where the orderly sat reading. He closed his book presently and questioned them concerning the world as they had seen it. As the evening wore on they began telling stories to relieve the tedium of their confinement. When it came the mate's turn he said:

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"This is the story I heard in Mozambique in the drinking house of Louis, the old Frenchman. It was told by a Dutch trader in pearls, and concerns the kingdom of Ecbahambra on the east coast of Africa. Perhaps it will interest you.

"The king of Ecbahambra is said to be a progressive and broad-minded man, whose highest aim in life is to lift his people out of their semi-barbarous condition. He has instituted many reforms, but perhaps his most worthy act was the suppression of the opium vice.

"Chinese merchants in great junks used to call at Ecbahambra to trade with the natives, and it was they who introduced the smoking of opium. The vice spread so rapidly that it threatened to demoralize the whole tribe, and the king saw that he must adopt drastic measures to crush it. So, after much thought, he decreed that every person found guilty of using the drug should die. After one or two executions the habit was checked, although many people still smoked in secret.

"Now the king had three wives, after the custom of his country, who were known as the great queen, the middle queen, and the little queen. The great queen was the favorite with the monarch. She had been given to him by a neighboring ruler and was the most beautiful and most hated woman in the country. The other queens hated her because of her beauty. The chief men of the kingdom hated her because of her influence with the king.

"So she lived a miserable life, tormented by her enemies and the victim of innumerable intrigues to overthrow her. The lesser queens set their maids to watch her and the chief men placed spies in the royal household to report on everything which she did. They all hoped to detect her in some wrong-doing and thus accomplish her downfall.

"Unknown to the king the great queen became a victim of the opium habit. Even after he issued his edict of death she continued in the use of the drug. In time knowledge of her vice came to the middle and the little queen. They talked the matter over in private and resolved to tell the chief men what they had heard concerning their rival, because they dared not accuse her openly to their royal husband."

The fourth mate paused abruptly in his story and the other

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men looked up in wonder. They saw a blue pallor spread over his face, his eyes rolled in their sockets and he half fell across the table. When they raised his head he was already unconscious, and in half an hour he was dead. Thus quickly does the blue plague strike down its victims.

The orderly telephoned to the town officials, who directed him to dig a grave and bury the corpse at once. So the two remaining sailors and the attendant turned up the loose sand under the palms and when the body was cold covered it from sight.

The next day the two sailors hardly spoke a word. The sudden leave-taking of their comrade, and fears for their own safety, cast a terrible gloom over their minds. When the orderly could endure the silence no longer he remarked: "It's too bad the mate didn't finish his story. It promised to be interesting. I wonder if the great queen was executed."

Whereupon the ship's cook said, sadly: "I have heard the story, and will finish it for you. It was told in the little wine shop kept by the Irishman, Burke, at the Port of the Two Seas."

"Good," said the orderly. "To tell the truth, I became quite interested in the queen's fate."

"The chief men," began the cook, "after hearing of the great queen's disobedience, went to the ruler and asked, 'Has not the king decreed that every person who smokes opium shall be beheaded?'

"'Even so,' replied the king.

"'Are the royal laws enforced against the poor and the weak alone?' they demanded.

"'They are to be executed against all alike, with favor to none,' answered the monarch.

"'Then why is it,' asked the chief men triumphantly, 'that the great queen is permitted to smoke and go unpunished?'

"When the king heard this he was speechless with fear. He dismissed the chief men with a wave of his hand, sent for his beautiful wife and asked if it was true what the people said about her. She kissed his foot in token of submission to his will and said that she could not deny it.

"Of course, the king was anxious to save his favorite queen, because he loved her and because he knew that her death would

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cause strife with the neighboring chieftain whose daughter she was. But, being a just king, he could not set aside his law, even to spare the queen and save his country from war.

"Hoping to find a way out of the difficulty he called together his five councillors and asked them if it were possible to save the queen. He was willing to make any sacrifice if only she might live. The councillors considered the matter gravely for a whole day and then decided that the law could not be revoked even to save the chief queen.

"But the king was a man of great resource. He called the two priests of the palace temple and asked them to extricate him from his position. It happened that one of the priests hated the great queen because she had such power over the monarch and he longed to see her removed even by death. The other loved the king and resolved that his favorite wife should not be executed.

"The priests arbitrated disputes and foretold future events by examining the entrails of a freshly slain bullock. So each killed a young bull in the light of the new moon and studied the entrails till the sun rose. The one who hated the queen reported that the signs read in the entrails pointed to her death. But the priest who loved the king said that the omens were favorable to the queen."

Unnoticed by the orderly, who was deeply interested in the story, the cook's voice had grown weaker and weaker till it finally died away in a groan. His arms fell to his knees, his pipe dropped from his lips, and the blue pallor crept over his face. The attendant sprang to his side and administered his most powerful medicines. But the cook never spoke again. In a few moments he ceased breathing, his features relaxed from their horrible grimace, and he was still.

The orderly immediately telephoned his death to the town and then took the yogi outside to scoop out the second grave. When the cook was buried beside the fourth mate under the palms the orderly and the remaining sailor returned to the shack and sat solemnly through the night.

After they had breakfasted and drank a little wine to cheer them, the orderly said, "I'm sorry the cook didn't finish his story. Now I shall never know the end, and I am much interested in the fate of the queen."

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The yogi looked up and answered quietly, "I, too, have heard the story and will finish it for you. The first mate told it to the captain one night while we lay at anchor in Delagoa Bay."

"Good," said the orderly relieved. Then a great doubt suddenly filled his mind. "But you may die like the others before you reach the end, so make the story short."

"I promise to finish it," said the yogi seriously.

"Very well, then. Go ahead."

So the wise man began: "The king was now in a worse quandary than ever. Never before had the priests differed in their readings of the entrails. If he accepted the favorable omen, and disregarded the other, the people would say that he had spared the queen because he loved her. Yet he could not bring himself to order the execution. Being a very determined man, however, he would not yield while one hope remained.

"On the Mount of the Moon, the highest peak in Ecbahambra, lives a hermit, a very holy man, who worships the Queen of Night. He eats no flesh and spends the hours between sunset and sunrise in prayer. In former years his word was greater than the king's, and even now it is held in reverence. The king, in his extremity, thought of the hermit and resolved to seek his help.

"The whole court made a three-days' journey to the summit of the mountain and the monarch begged the holy man to intervene in behalf of the beautiful queen. The hermit listened to the king's trouble, thought on the matter for two nights, and finally said, 'On the day following the full of the moon go to the temple gardens and watch the sacred white elephant. If he sneezes three time between sunrise and sunset, the great queen may live.'

"The sacred white elephant," explained the yogi, "is worshipped by the people of Ecbahambra as if he were a god. He is kept in the temple garden day and night, chained to a huge pillar of stone. Once a month, when the moon is full, he decides great questions of state by the drooping of an eyelid or the swish of his tail.

"The king and his retinue journeyed back to the capital and waited till the time of the full moon. On the following day a

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great crowd of people had gathered in the gardens to witness the final test of the king.

"About an hour after the sun appeared the elephant rose from his knees, lifted his trunk high in the air, and sneezed so loudly that the children cried out in fear. The king, who was watching from a pavilion, was delighted, and sent word immediately to his favorite spouse that she was one-third saved.

"Then the people waited in silence. Noon passed and the white elephant had not sneezed again. The king, greatly worried, hastened to the palace to consult the chief queen. Now the queen was a person of even greater resource than her husband. When she heard that the sacred elephant had sneezed only once, and saw that the day was half spent, she said, 'Prepare some new hay from the sweet grass which grows in the river bottoms, sprinkle it full of snuff, and give it to the elephant.'

"So the king ordered his servants to cut a bundle of the sweet-smelling grass and they hastened to obey him. While it was still wet he sprinkled snuff on it unseen by the court officials, and offered it to the elephant. The great beast had scarcely begun to eat it when he suddenly lifted his trunk and before he could rise to his feet sneezed so terribly that his breath fell on the people like rain. The king laughed loudly and sent word to his waiting wife that she was two-thirds saved.

"But after that the elephant refused to eat the hay.

"They watched all that afternoon. Once the elephant rose from his knees, stretched out his trunk as if to sneeze, and sank down again without making a sound. Twice he did this and the king was very angry. He would have ordered his soldiers to spear the beast, but he feared the people.

"At last the sun rested on the top of a low hill in the west and began to disappear. Only a few moments of the day remained. The elephant had sneezed twice and the king was beside himself with rage. He walked up and down before the elephant muttering savage threats —"

The orderly, who was now wholly engrossed in the story and watched every word as it came from the yogi's lips, saw the old man's mouth contorted in a hideous grin. An instant later the

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fatal blue pallor suffused his face and his whole body began to tremble. The attendant sprang up and treated him as he had treated the fourth mate and the ship's cook. While he forced stimulants between the rigid jaws he shrieked to the dying man, "Wait a minute, wait. You can't die till you finish the story. Remember your promise. Did the elephant sneeze again?" But his frantic appeals fell on unheeding ears. The last sailor was dead and the story was still unfinished.

The yogi buried, the orderly was compelled to remain in the pest house until the period of incubation for the disease had passed. As no symptoms of the plague developed, he was soon back at his work in the hospital. But he was greatly changed. Living alone in the shack that had witnessed the death of the three sailors he had brooded over the story left uncompleted by the fourth mate, the ship's cook and the yogi, and agonized over the fate of the great queen till his mind had become morbidly affected. His friends could not diagnose his malady, but thought that he was suffering from melancholia brought on by his horrible death watch.

During his absence from the hospital a new nurse had been received. It was her custom once a week to give amateur demonstrations in spiritualism for the entertainment of the other nurses and the internes. One evening the orderly attended a seance out of curiosity. The nurse placed his hands on a slate and told him to think of a question. But the poor fellow, his thoughts ever brooding on the fate of the African queen, disregarded her instructions. After a while the nurse lifted his hands, turned over the slate, and said playfully, "Let's see what's written." This is what they read:

"The sun had sunk so low behind the hill that the eye could gaze on it without watering, when the elephant rose from his knees, stretched out his trunk to its full length, and sneezed for the third time."

The yogi had kept his promise.

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The Game on the Lonesome Road.*

BY JACK BROWNING.

THE ponies were comparatively fresh, considering the miles they had covered, for the girl, careful to preserve their strength for the still harder ride ahead, had changed from one to the other at frequent intervals. But the girl herself, when at last she reached the stream and the lone cottonwood, was fairly dizzy with the heat and dust.

The stream was hardly more than a trickle — indeed, the ponies drank the water almost as fast as it dripped down from the hillside to the road — and the cottonwood, near the end of its long struggle against drouth and wind, had scarcely foliage enough to cast a shadow — but they were the first suggestion of water and shade that the girl had seen since early morning, and the sun was now at its highest and hottest.

"That's enough, boys," she said. "You can have another taste before we start."

The ponies, reluctant but obedient, put their noses together in a clump of parched grass, and the girl sank down with her back to the tree and rolled a cigarette. After a puff or two she removed her leggins and shoes and stockings, and splashed her feet like a child in the shallow water.

"Oh, but I'm tired! Heigh-ho!"

But even as she sighed a smile flickered through the weariness of her face, and she prepared to remount. Ahead was the long, lonesome road, with its dust and heat; here were water and shade and a place to rest; but ahead, also, was a man. Her past was threaded with many blistered roads such as this, and with other roads that were snow-covered and wind-swept; but each was a memory to smile at now, for each had led her to the man, or had

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led the man to her. Soon this road, too, would be a memory to smile at. With a defiant little laugh she faced the dust again, and coaxed the ponies to a gentle canter. She rode astride, and her slender young body fell into the swing with the easy, loose-armed erectness of a cowboy.

There was not a sign of human life in any direction. Miles back, hours ago, she had passed a freight wagon bound for Vickers, but the driver had roused himself only long enough to nod, and to uncoil his popping whip down the long length of his mule team, and then had relapsed into his heat-induced lethargy. Not even his dust was in sight now. Far behind, through the flickering heat-waves, the dim blue outline of the mountain she had descended in the cool morning wavered indistinctly. It seemed years behind her now — like the inhabited world; and she sighed at the recollection of the cool mountain trail and the dew-wet leaves that had brushed her face. But ahead, and looming hopefully nearer now, was the range the man was to cross to meet her. He would be well down through the foothills by this time, and where the road branched off toward Vickers they would meet, unless ——

Sometimes, in such weary hours as these, she was compelled to admit that luck had been overkind to her and the man. But — and optimism was never a full moment behind the intruding fear — luck would surely outlast her youth, and after that — well!

Again her defiant little laugh broke the stillness. Already she could see the green of the timber-covered slopes, and in two hours — perhaps sooner — she would be with the man.

During her abstraction she had drooped like a flower in the heat, and the ponies had slipped into a shambling walk; but, suddenly thrilled by the thought that the man might even then be waiting at the rendezvous, she sat erect and eager, and called the ponies to quick attention. For some time she rode briskly; and she forgot her weariness as the range, for so long only a smooth mass, broke up gradually into cañons and ravines and crags, and its trembling, indistinct blue changed into stable and distinct shades of brown and gray and green. But the air of the western highlands, so dry and clear except in times of storm,

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gives to far-distant objects so convincing an appearance of nearness that even practised eyes are often deceived; and the girl grew weary again long before she reached the foothills.

But finally she gained the forks of the road and the shade. She slipped to the ground with a sigh of relief, and gave the ponies their heads in the grass. Then she whistled — the clear, sweet call of the phoebe bird. The two plaintive notes seemed to hover an instant in the hot air, then float away to the coolness of the deeper wood. A moment the girl listened expectantly, but there was no answer, and she sighed. Hopefully, however, she repeated the call; and this time, from deep in the wood, there came a faint response. Trembling with excited eagerness, she whistled again; and again, nearer now, came the answer.

"He is here!" she whispered.

Time and again she called, and each time the answer echoed nearer. But suddenly her heart sank. The answer had come from almost directly above her, and, looking up into the tree, she saw a phoebe bird fluttering expectantly from branch to branch.

In spite of her disappointment she smiled. "Poor little bird! I suppose you are disappointed, too. But never fear, our mates will come!"

She whistled again, and the tiny gray bird fluttered almost within reach of her hand. But she was too tired to play.

"Good-by, little lover!" she said. And then, choosing the thickest shade, she threw off her broad felt hat and dropped at full length, limply, to the grass. But even stronger than her weariness was her impatience, and after a few moments she sat up and drew from her belt a small, roughly-sketched map, which she examined attentively, reading the penciled directions at the bottom.

"Hide in the thick timber between the forks of the road," the directions ran, "till I come. I should make it by two o'clock — three, at the latest; but you may wait till four. If I am not there by four, don't attempt to investigate, but take the back trail — and hurry. Ride the fresher horse, and leave the other, saddled and bridled, tied in the brush. Remember, don't try to investigate!"

"The coward!" she said, slipping the map back under her

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belt. But there was only tenderness in her voice; for she knew that the man's daring weakened only where she was concerned. She looked at her watch. It was three o'clock.

"He will surely be here soon," she thought. "Perhaps——" She looked up through the branches of the tall tree above her. "Perhaps I could see him from there."

Drawing on her gauntlets to protect her hands, she caught a low-hanging branch and scrambled nimbly up, higher and higher, till she swayed precariously on the topmost limb. From her lookout she could take in the ascending road for perhaps half a mile, and beyond, all the way to the top of the hill, short segments of the winding strip reappeared at frequent intervals, but, even with her binocular, she could detect no sign of life.

"I'm going to ride on and meet him," she resolved finally. "He will be worn out after the long ride — and, besides, we can save time that way. But what's that?"

Lying in the road, so near that she had overlooked it, was a small white object — a torn fragment of wrapping paper, or of newspaper, she thought at first.

"But no! It's a — yes, a handkerchief! That's odd! And there, farther up the road, are some more white spots. They look like — I believe they're — yes! they are playing cards! And there are more, still farther up the road!"

Caught by a fear too swift for the guidance of reason, she slipped recklessly to the ground and ran the few yards to the handkerchief.

"His!"

The color left her face, and a hundred fragmentary thoughts flashed so wildly through her mind that she grew dizzy. But, remembering the cards, and intuitively accepting them as a message from the man, she ran like a frightened animal toward them.

Upturned in the road were an ace and jack of spades, and a three of diamonds; face down were two other cards, which she quickly reversed.

"The king and queen of spades — a four flush! That's plain enough — he has lost!"

For a moment she swayed, almost fainting. Prolonged anxiety, and the fatigue of the long, hot road, had left her with scant

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strength to bear the shock; but with sheer force of mind she quieted her trembling nerves, and turned her thoughts from despair to a rational consideration of the situation.

"But," she thought hopefully, "he cannot have been captured —his hands would be bound if he were a prisoner."

The hope was a slender one, but her anxiety magnified it almost to certainty. There was still the second card-message a short distance beyond, but, instead of going at once to it, she thought to save time by first running back for the horses. She was resolved to find the man, if she had to follow the road to Vickers; and in a very few minutes she had remounted and lashed the ponies to a swift gallop.

It was a king of diamonds that stopped her; a little farther on she picked up a jack of hearts, and beyond, a king of clubs.

"King — jack — king!" she said aloud. "King — jack — king!" In her haste and anxiety to clear the obscure message she fairly pleaded with the cards. "King — jack — king! — Oh!"

Her voice broke, but, clinching her teeth, she forced back the half-escaped sob.

"That means — he is the jack — yes! And between two kings — he is a prisoner!"

This certainty, and the necessity for quick action which it involved, gave her a man's strength. With the keen eye of a mountaineer she scanned the road, reading its signs almost at a glance.

"Probably a buckboard, or a light spring wagon," she thought, examining the one narrow track in the dust. "Nothing else has passed for some time. The wagon must explain how he was able to get at the cards. They are not his cards — they are old and worn — but there may have been a deck in the wagon, and even with his hands tied behind him, he could probably have got at them."

But speculation was of little use. Impatiently she remounted. There was no trace of weariness in her face now; the pretty curve of her lips was straight and tense with determination; and, in spite of the steepness of the road, she urged the ponies with spur and whip.

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But abruptly she stopped again; a deuce of spades lay face up in the dust. Pausing only long enough to slip it under her belt with the other cards, she put foot to stirrup. But, even as she rose from the ground, her keen eyes detected another white spot, a few yards beyond. It had almost escaped her attention because of its smallness, for it was only the torn quarter of a card.

Excitement — desperation — seemed to have given her a sixth sense; almost instantly she grasped the meaning.

"Quarter past two!" she exclaimed. "That means an hour ago. But the road is rough and steep — I can overtake them!"

Again she was off at a gallop. Her eyes eagerly scanned the road, but there was no further message to stop her, and in half an hour she came to the top of the ridge. Stopping her horses just under the comb, she crept cautiously up and peered over. For perhaps a mile the road sloped gently downward to the bottom of a wide, shallow ravine. For most of the distance it was hidden by twists and turns, and by the heavy timber, but it showed itself often enough to convince the girl that nobody was passing along it.

With the utmost care she examined, through her binocular, the visible fragments of road, and the intervening patches of timber, scarcely breathing the while. Suddenly she drew a sharp breath, and strained eagerly forward. She had located them. At the very bottom of the ravine, half hidden under the trees, she spied a wagon — a light spring wagon, it seemed, and ——

"Yes! they've stopped! There must be a spring or a stream down there and they've stopped for lunch."

A whisp of smoke, upcurling near the wagon, verified her guess; and a moment later a man stepped into view. He paused a moment beside the wagon, then stepped back under the trees, out of sight.

Her course was plain enough now. Remounting, she headed into the timber, then, safely hidden, she turned down hill. The underbrush twisted like snakes about the horses' legs; the overhanging branches tore viciously at her jacket and hair; but, foot by foot, yard by yard, she broke a way through. Several times she dismounted and crept out to the road to get her bearings, and finally, convinced that she had come as near as would be safe with the horses, she left them tied and continued afoot.

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Soon she came to a small stream, clear as a crystal, cold as ice. It was very simple now; she had only to follow the stream, for doubtless the men were lunching on its bank. But first she bathed her face and hands, smiling even as she did so at the vanity that clung to her in spite of the desperate situation. She must be fresh and — yes, pretty; why not admit it! For was not the man to see her in a very few minutes!

A moment later she disappeared among the trees, careful to avoid the dead twigs on the ground, and gently guiding the live branches about her back into place. Finally she even dropped to her hands and knees, and crept, inch by inch, like some wild thing near its prey.

In a few moments she heard a short laugh; and, a second later, she paused, breathless, at the edge of a thicket. The whole scene was spread out before her, screened only by a thin, gauze-like fringe of foliage.

And she saw the man. He sat on the ground, his back toward her, his hands clasped behind him — a metallic gleam on his wrists told why. There was a huge man fumbling in the wagon, and another man, of medium size, bending over a small fire, but she had eyes only for the man on the ground. Even as she looked, the large man said something — she could not make out the words — and the man on the ground laughed. The girl thrilled. How good to hear his laugh again!

Now she drew from the light holsters at her belt two small automatic pistols, and, with one clasped in each hand, crept forward. Choosing a moment when both men had their backs toward her, she broke through the last fringe of brush.

"Hands up!"

The smaller man turned like a cat; the large man turned almost deliberately; but both men faced the girl with upraised hands.

"Look out for the little man — he's quick as a wink." It was the man on the ground who spoke.

"All right," the girl replied. "Tell them what to do."

The man on the ground laughed. The big man, whose first expression of surprise had turned to an amused grin, laughed also; and even the smaller man smiled.

"In the first place," the man on the ground half-laughed, "be

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very careful. She's a first rate shot with those toys — and I hope you'll take my word for it. Now, lower your left hands — unbuckle your belts — and let them slip to the ground. Thanks. Now, Mr. Deputy, lie down — face down." This to the small man. "And you, Mr. Sheriff, remove this jewelry with which you have bedecked me."

In a moment the man was free.

"Now," he said, smiling in a puzzled way at the captives, "I don't know what to do with you. You've treated me well, and I'd like to return the compliment — but how?"

He looked with such good-natured bewilderment that the sheriff laughed. "Oh, don't put yourself to too much trouble," he said. "And say, there ain't no use lettin' that bacon burn."

The man made haste to lift the pan from the fire.

"Well," he said reluctantly, "there's only one thing to do. Back up to this tree, sheriff, and you, deputy, to that. They're about the right size."

The men obeyed, and in a moment each was secured, his arms handcuffed behind him and around the tree.

"Now," the late prisoner said, "you may sit down or stand up, just as you please. The only trouble is that you are likely to starve before anybody happens along this way."

"No." The girl, who had silently stood guard, now spoke up. "I passed a freighter several miles back. He'll surely be along late to-night or early in the morning. He can hardly camp by that little stream back there — there's not enough water in it for half his mules."

"Good!" the man exclaimed. "The freighter will have an axe, and can chop down the trees. I'd leave the handcuff keys, but there's a bare chance that somebody may happen along. We'll do what we can to make you comfortable."

He carried the two cushions from the wagon, and gave one to each officer for a seat. He also scraped up what hay was in the wagon-box and kicked it out to the horses, which were tied to the rear wheels. In the meantime the girl had poured a cup of coffee, and found sugar and a spoon in the open grub-box.

"How much sugar, sheriff?" she asked.

"'Bout one of your hands full," the good-natured officer replied.

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"That equals about two spoonfuls."

The girl held the cup while the sheriff emptied it; after which, rinsing it in the stream and refilling it, she performed a like service for the deputy. Then, assisted by the man, she prepared several bread-and-bacon sandwiches, which she spread on the clean grass near the officers.

"Rather awkward position," she said regretfully, "but I guess you can nibble them by bending over."

"Never did bother much about table manners," the sheriff laughed. "But we won't give the exhibition till you're gone."

The man, while the girl had been serving the officers, had made two small packages of sandwiches, which he slipped into his coat pockets. Then he beckoned to the girl.

"Let's have a cup of coffee now, and then be off."

He poured the coffee, and the girl sat down beside him on the grass. The officers looked at them curiously, but said nothing till they had finished, and were rising. Then the sheriff spoke.

"So long," he said. "Don't suppose we'll meet again soon, because a hour's start in these mountains is good as a pardon. But you better change your stamping ground. So long."

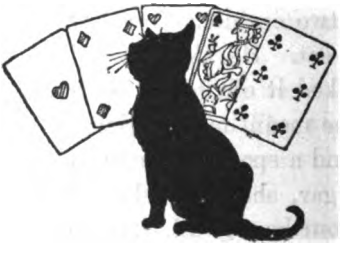
"So long," the man replied.

"Good-by," the girl said.

The man paused beside the wagon long enough to get a small canvas bag, which he slung over his shoulder, and then, the girl at his side, stepped off up the road.

"An' say! young feller," the sheriff called, "I think you're in mighty poor business, but say! the girl's eighteen carat, all right — an' set with di'monds!"

Unmistakably in earnest, the young man turned. "Say, sheriff," he replied, "we're pards on that opinion!"



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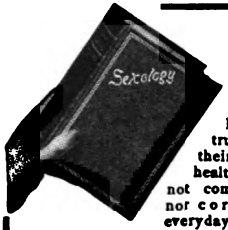

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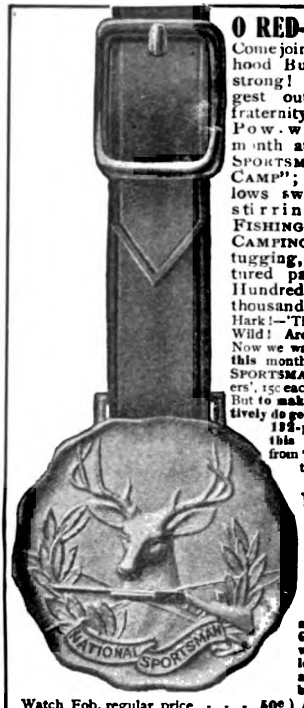

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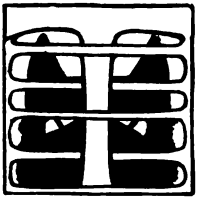
The Fourth Finger.*

BY L. PRINCE



HERE was a stone church upon the corner, surrounded by a wide lawn, and at the sidewalk encircled by a high, iron fence, set in a cement coping. Upon this coping, with his back settled comfortably against the fence, nicely balanced so that each shoulder rested upon a picket, sat a blind beggar with a placard upon his breast from a string around his neck, and a tin cup extended for charity.

This had been his post for many years, and with the sunshine beaming down and warming his body — for he was never on duty when the weather was bad — the blind man secured a quiet happiness from life. His greatest pleasure was forming pictures in his mind of those who passed him on the sidewalk, using his ears as eyes. By much practice he could tell instantly the general aspect of the passers-by: that quick, short tap-tap was the step of my lady on her way to the shops; the much heavier and longer stride was that of her husband; the uncertain, shuffling gait of old age was easily discernible; the patter of the light, skipping steps of childhood was as music to the beggar.

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One day, in the early afternoon, the street was unusually quiet and the beggar almost dozed, for it was warm and pleasant. From down the sidewalk there came the sound of approaching footsteps, and the beggar roused himself. This was a heavy man he judged — middle-aged, perhaps, walking with a decision that bespoke a strong will. The beggar wondered if he would recognize his extended cup, for the coins that had rattled there had been few that morning.

The footsteps hesitated before the blind man and the beggar smiled to himself, for he knew that the tin cup was about to receive a donation. And it was so, the coin, of silver, dropping with a merry tinkle that sent a joyous exhilaration to the heart of the blind man, for before anything else he loved the sound of money dropping into his cup.

He waited expectantly for the charitable person to pass on, but the silence of the day was not broken by sound of footsteps. Presently, the beggar knew that the man was looking at him intently, and after a second of wondering why, a sort of dread chill clutched his heart and his breath caught in his throat.

And when this man spoke to him there came a buzzing in his head, and he clutched the bars behind him for support, for it was the voice the coming of which he had awaited for twenty years. In the few following seconds, while he was speechless, his mind reverted to bygone days, and events of the past were reviewed in his brain as if pictures of them had been thrown instantaneously upon a sheet before eyes that could see, yet as clearly as if they had taken place but yesterday.

He remembered himself, a light-hearted lad, one of the most popular of the students in St. Petersburg. Then there was a vision of the girl with the wondrous blue eyes and the glimmering golden hair. And then the secret societies that might have accomplished much for the cause of freedom. But there was another lad who, like himself, loved this lass of the blue eyes and the sun-kissed hair, and, more lucky or worthy, won her. They had been friends, these two, and seemed still to be, but in the heart of one there rankled hate, because of defeat, jealousy, and the other's success.

So he remembered how, at a meeting of the most virulent of the secret societies, he had sat among his comrades, pale of face and

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solemn, so that they jibed him because he was so. But when there were blows upon the doors that shattered it and the police were there he, alone, was calm, and retreated to a safe corner until the tumult of combat was over. Many were taken, but some escaped.

And he, the traitor, free the next morning, had visited the lad who had been his friend and rival, to gloat over him with bars between them, and to tell how he would win the girl with the blue eyes. He remembered the horrified surprise of the other and how it had grown to a fury. He had stood in the stone-walled corridor, with his hands grasping the bars of the door of the narrow cell, and he had laughed at the fury of the other. Then, before he knew what had happened, the caged man had slashed at him with a table knife, and the fourth finger of his left hand had been cut off at the second joint. And when he had retreated, nursing the stump of his finger, he had heard the other calling after him that sometime, somewhere, he would find him again, and kill him.

But retribution had come swifter. Somehow, he did not know how, his treason was discovered by those who had escaped. And they had taken a terrible revenge, these former comrades, for with red hot irons they had burnt out his eyes !

But now the voice of the man before the beggar was repeating the question he had asked once before.

" You are blind ? " he said.

The blind man drew himself together. He was almost sure he recognized the voice. In his waiting for it to come he had imagined that it would be just this way, and so he was prepared.

" You see this sign," he mumbled, indicating it upon his breast. " I thank you for your charity, stranger."

" Stranger ? "

" I do not know — I am blind."

" May I ask your name ? Are you an American ? I hope I do not appear too inquisitive."

" My name is William Darling. Yes, I am an American."

The other was silent, nervously tapping his toe upon the pavement. Presently he sat down upon the coping by the side of the blind man and spoke again.

" It is strange," he said, " but there is something about you that reminds me of a man who was my friend many years ago, even

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though you do not resemble him. He was fair of skin, with light-colored hair, quite the antithesis of your raven locks and great beard, for he was clean-shaven. Your left hand, that you keep concealed under your coat — may I see it? A strange request and you look startled. Put it down as a whim and here's another piece of silver for your cup."

But the beggar seemed not to hear the words that were spoken. If he could see he might have been staring intently at something in the distance.

The man by his side laughed coldly.

"No use to hide it now, Peter Siebert," he said. "Oh, I know you! Did you think that dye upon your hair or that great beard, treated likewise, would hide you from my eyes? It is a pity you could not grow another finger, for your hand was not concealed when I first glanced your way, and so I recognized you."

The beggar's body huddled between the iron pickets of the fence. He knew that he was recognized and he felt a faintness come over him. The hand that held the tin cup trembled so that the money in it rattled.

"You have named me right, Ivan Kesheleff," said the beggar. "I am Peter Siebert, or what was that man."

"So! I have something here that belongs to you, and no doubt you will be glad to possess it again. Your finger, that I have treasured so carefully since the day we last met, is what I speak about."

He dropped the bones into the tin cup.

The blind man shuddered and flung the contents of the cup from him, so that the bones of the finger rolled into the gutter and the coins flew in every direction. Some kind-hearted people who were passing at that moment, thinking it an accident, stopped to return the coins to the beggar. One man glared indignantly at the blind man's companion because he made no motion to help pick up the money.

And presently, when the people had passed, Ivan Kesheleff spoke again: "Do you know what I'm going to do, now that I've found you?" he said.

The other was silent.

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"No? Do you think I have searched the world for the pleasure of looking upon your face?" The voice was deep with suppressed passion. Then he laughed. "No, I came to kill you, Peter Siebert!"

The begger shivered involuntarily and edged away a trifle from the other. "You want revenge, even now?" he asked.

"Now? You put accent upon the word. Why not now, after the hate that was born has grown so great since these many years have passed?"

"Because you find me but half a man — with sightless eyes. Life? — what is it to me? Don't you think I'd rather die than live always like this?"

The beggar's voice had sincerity in it, yet it was but the mocking of what he had practised years to say. If these words had come from his lips at the time when he was first blinded there might have been some truth in them, but now life had grown sweeter and the thought of death was unbearable. He knew it was useless to appeal for mercy, for he had read the man by his voice well enough to know that there was no chance for that. His purpose was to convince the other that the better revenge would be to permit him to live in blindness.

Neither man spoke for a little space and then it was the blind man who broke the silence.

"Evening is approaching," he said, "for I feel the warmth of the sun leaving my body. It is my time for deserting this corner. Perhaps it is best that you are cheated of your revenge, for surely enough harm and unhappiness has already been done. Will you permit me to say that I am sorry for the past — not for my own self, but for the evil that has come to others?"

He made as if to rise, but the other checked him with outstretched hand, and a nauseating fear rose within him. But outwardly he did not flinch, not even when the man by his side laughed with horrible mirthlessness.

"Not so fast," said Ivan Kesheleff. "You are a good actor, Peter Siebert, even as you were in your younger days, but I can read you better now. Life still holds some music for you, and I will silence that."

The beggar leaned faintly against the iron pickets, a trembling

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hand fumbling at his beard. He could imagine the inevitable set of Ivan Kesheleff's mouth and the hate that burned in his eyes.

"You will murder me, then?" he asked, with irregularly uttered words.

"Even so, Peter Siebert."

There was a pause of a few seconds and then the beggar spoke again:

"You have a — a knife?" he asked.

"Yes — I have treasured it for many years. I have my fingers upon it under my coat and I assure you it is a beautiful blade, of finest steel, long and slender and delicately pointed, so as to draw little blood. I had it fashioned for its purpose and it will answer well."

"You think to frighten me," said Peter Siebert, and he straightened his back, though it required a mighty effort to appear without fear. "I will not cringe before you, Ivan Kesheleff. Nor do I ask mercy of you, no more than I would squeeze granite in an effort to get water from it. See, I do not shrink from you!"

He waited for the thrust of the steel, but it did not come, and he could not hear a sound from the man by his side. The silence continued for a space that seemed an age to the beggar.

"Are you there, Ivan Kesheleff?" he asked at last.

"Yes, I am here."

"Then why do you not strike?"

"I have the blade between my fingers and I but meditate upon my revenge, growing the sweeter with each passing second. I would that I could have company, for you will remember that I was always a free-handed fellow, and I would like to share my pleasure. Do you think these careless citizens, hurrying home after a day's work, would rejoice with me in my revenge?"

But the beggar would not answer, and Ivan Kesheleff laughed that horrible laugh that sent a shiver down the spine of the blind man.

"Presently," said Ivan, "presently, I will kill you."

The beggar sat very still. His ear was trained in terrible an-

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ticipation toward his companion and every sound by his side sent a quaking fear to his heart that his last moment had come.

The twilight was deepening into night, but the beggar did not feel the chill of the air, so intent was he in his anticipation of death. The toilers hurrying home sent curious glances toward the strange pair sitting side by side upon the coping. The beggar's tin cup lay neglected at his feet, for he had forgotten that he was a beggar. He sat hunched forward upon the edge of his seat, something peculiarly alert and expectant in his appearance. Several times he turned his head to the left, as if in vain effort to pierce the cloud that obscured his vision so as to see his companion, and each time that he did so Ivan Kesheleff laughed.

Soon the stars came out in the heavens and the bustle of traffic died away until only an occasional footfall broke the silence of the night. The hours that passed were terrible ones for the beggar. For a time his body was entirely motionless, listening for a sound from the man by his side, but soon his hands began to fidget nervously and, although he was cognizant of this and endeavored to stop, he could not keep still. And before long this nervousness became more violent, until it grew into a frenzy, culminating in a useless blind attack upon Ivan Kesheleff. The blind man's hands grasped for the throat of his tormentor and found it, only to be shaken off, for his arms, long unused to exercise, were weak. He was thrust back violently, his head striking the iron pickets of the fence.

So he sat passive again, hardly aware of the dull pain in the back of his head, waiting for the thrust of the knife already so long delayed. And when the silence grew unbearable each time he would cry out, "Are you there, Ivan Kesheleff?"

And always the answer would be a mirthless laugh and the words, "Yes, I am here, Peter Siebert!"

From time to time — it seemed an age of interval to the beggar — the bell in the church tower boomed the hour, and each time the sound caused him to start and almost wrung an exclamation from his lips, so high was the tension his nerves endured.

Once he heard footsteps approaching and hoped that the person would pass. The steady tread came nearer and the beggar wanted to cry out, but the thought that it would be his last ut-

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tered word checked him. It was a patrolman on his round. His footsteps passed and then died away in the distance.

At last the blind man was sure that he heard a motion toward him by the man at his side. His hands clenched and he felt the blood mount to his head. Then the breath of Ivan Kesheleff was upon his face — an arm jostled him. There was a muttered exclamation from the other. The beggar cried out shrilly, for he had felt the point of the knife over his heart, and then he fainted.

It was not long before he came to, and when he did so he thought at first that he had passed through the valley of death. In his present life he had often wondered about his future and whether his eyes would be blessed with sight when he should awake in the unknown. But he was still blind, the hard coping was under him, and he felt the iron pickets in his back.

"Are you there, Ivan Kesheleff?" he cried when he realized that he lived.

No answering voice broke the stillness of the night. A sob shook the form of the beggar, and then it caught in his throat and he started upright, a sweat breaking out upon his body with that same fear that had overpowered him before he lost consciousness, for he had heard that awful laugh of his relentless companion.

And again Peter Siebert suffered as he had suffered before, awaiting the coming of death. At last again there came the touch of the steel over his heart, yet so lightly as not even to prick the skin. Ivan Kesheleff saw the beggar sink back unconscious against the bars a second time.

He waited patiently for his victim to regain consciousness, but in vain. At last, something in the huddled figure warning him, he grasped it by the shoulders and shook it roughly. But it would not awake. He placed a hand over his enemy's heart, and then, with a startled cry, he walked hurriedly away from the spot, for Peter Siebert was dead.

And next morning the body was found upon the coping as he had left it. There was no sign of violence — not a scratch of the skin — and the reported cause of the death was heart disease.

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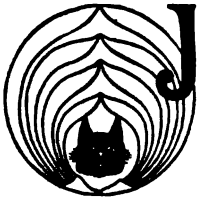
Doodle's Discovery.*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.



JOHN JEFFERSON DOODLE derived a large amount of pleasure from the knowledge that he was considered a crank. In Doodle's opinion cranks were persons who, knowing the right way, refused to have things done in any other. John Jefferson demanded full value for his own money and persisted in giving the same in return for the money of others. Business back-steps, fool fakery, and lame excuses were foreign to his methods, so when he opened his restaurant success was assured. Doodle's was the most up-to-date café in the entire eating zone. The food, service and appointments were of the best, and from the opening day the future prosperity of Doodle was something that a fifth-rate prophet could foretell without running the risk of a headache.

But Doodle's Café was in the direct line of a trouble cyclone. In the washrooms connected with the establishment the proprietor supplied the finest toilet soap that money could buy, but unfortunately for the peace of mind of John Jefferson he was called upon to supply much more than legitimate demands required. Expensive soap proved a tempting bait to unprincipled patrons, and Doodle soon discovered that something like forty dollars' worth of soap was removed to meet the daily demands of his six hundred patrons. Legitimate hand-washing could not possibly be responsible for this enormous outlay, so Doodle set his brain the task of devising a plan by which the thieves could be detected.

As all the world knows, various ingenious schemes have been tried with the object of protecting the soap in the washrooms of hotels and restaurants. The cakes have been chained to the wash-stands, for example, only to be cut away by well-to-do people

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who take things as they come. Again, hotel proprietors have put up liquid soap in fixed contrivances, but the kleptomaniacs outwitted the vigilance of the worried owners. The soap was carried away in bottles, and the unfortunate proprietors, finding it impossible to circumvent the ingenuity of the thieves, furnished common soap in large quantities as the only means of lessening their loss.

But Doodle continued to buy the finest toilet soap that was on the market, and he was determined that no thief would make him change his methods. On this account he set his wits to work and Doodle's Soap Thief Detector was the result.

The café owner was in rapture over his invention. Its ability to do all that he claimed for it was beyond question. He had it patented, fitted to the wash-stands, and then awaited results.

The Detector was a simple contrivance. It consisted of a small kodak-like arrangement concealed behind the mirror that hung above each wash-bowl, the eye of the camera being hidden among the electric light fixtures. The picture-taking device was connected with the soap tray in such a manner that a person lifting the soap relieved the pressure upon a button in the bottom of the tray and was by this means immediately photographed by the unseen instrument. When the soap was replaced a self-developing film was moved up in readiness to snap the next person who lifted the tablet, but if it was not replaced the photographic apparatus stopped working and the picture of the soap thief was, therefore, the last on the film.

Doodle gave orders to his staff to immediately report to him when they found a cake of soap missing from its tray, and on the first day he waited anxiously. John Jefferson had philanthropic ideas and he considered the exposure of a soap thief an act for the benefit of the community. He had not long to wait. Dinner had scarcely been served when a cake of soap was reported missing and the proprietor immediately stepped to the washroom and took the film from its place of concealment. The last snapshot was that of a well-dressed middle-aged man, and Doodle, with the long film in his hand, walked down the big dining-room in search of the original. At the very last table he found his man, and, leaning over, addressed him.

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"Pardon me," he said, quietly, touching an overcoat that hung near the customer, "is this your overcoat?"

The diner nodded.

"Then," continued John Jefferson, "will you kindly take out of the pocket the cake of soap you took from the wash-stand a few moments ago?"

The accused man grew red in the face and indignant, but Doodle was persistent.

"Very well," he said, when the customer refused to comply with the request, "I will take it out myself. It belongs to me."

He inserted his hand in the pocket of the overcoat and drew forth the missing soap wrapped in one of the small hand towels also belonging to the establishment.

"As I thought," commented Doodle. "A wet piece of soap calls for a dry wrapper, and I suffer doubly. Now, sir, you had better keep quiet. I have the picture of the fellow who took the soap, and that picture is yours." He pushed the film before the eyes of the astonished diner and that person immediately grabbed his hat and coat, paid his check, and fled.

The Thief Detector did good work on its first day. Twenty-seven prominent citizens were among those detected, and the machine finished up the day's work by photographing the mayor of the city, who was accompanied by three ladies. The official blustered when Doodle made the accusation, but, like the others, was forced into a corner when confronted with the tell-tale film, and he drew a cake of soap from his pocket when the proprietor threatened to call an officer.

In ten days Doodle had recovered thirteen hundred and eleven cakes of soap, or, more correctly speaking, he had recovered several cakes thirteen hundred and eleven times from the same number of soap thieves, who were ignorant of the fact that their theft had been recorded by the unseen instrument. And in no single instance had the Detector made a mistake.

But Doodle found that the detection of soap thieves was a costly business. The thirteen hundred and eleven customers detected in the act of purloining the cakes of soap did not return, and each day made matters worse. The Detector's average decreased as the patrons fell away, but each day it scored its victims.

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And Doodle was determined. He had made up his mind that he would not allow a man who paid seventy-five cents for a dinner to carry off forty cents' worth of soap, and the moment the machine registered a thief John Jefferson lost no time in making the accusation and recovering the stolen property.

On the twenty-fifth day after the installation of the invention Doodle had but ten customers to dinner, and before the meal was over John Jefferson Doodle retired to his office, and throwing himself into a chair spent some two hours in considering the situation. He then arose and acted with sudden energy. He dictated a lengthy telegram and after seeing that it was immediately dispatched, he drafted a circular and had it typewritten. Then, with a satisfied expression upon his face, he sat down and awaited events.

And he had not long to wait. Two hours after the dispatch of the wire a fat man walked into the dining-rooms and asked for the proprietor. John Jefferson inclined his head and motioned the stranger to a seat.

"I am the president of the International Toilet Soap Trust," said the newcomer eagerly, "and I came in response to your peculiar telegram. It is a trifle vague, and we want more information regarding the matter you mentioned."

John Jefferson Doodle stood up, and without speaking led the way to the washroom. With a grim smile upon his face he explained the mechanism of the Soap Thief Detector to the president of the International Toilet Soap Trust, and the fat man breathed heavily.

"There is nothing vague about this," sneered Doodle. "What I wired you is the truth. Nine out of every ten people who steal soap from hotels and restaurants never buy toilet soap. Therefore, the more thieving the more soap you sell, and it stands to reason that you do not wish the Thief Detector to come into general use."

"Into general use?" queried the visitor.

"Yes," snapped Doodle. "I'm going to have this circular printed, which tells the whole story in plain language. If every hotel, café, and boarding-house uses one — but, there, read it, and then I'll talk terms with you."

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The president of the International Toilet Soap Trust leaned back in his chair and read the document, then he did some rapid figuring on the back of an envelope.

"What are your terms?" he asked sullenly.

"A quarter of a million for all rights," cried Doodle. "If you don't want it I guess that every member of the Hotel, Restaurant and Boarding House Union will feel glad when they get my circular. There are over two hundred thousand members, and the trifling sum of five dollars a head will yield me over a million."

The other stood silent for a moment, regarding the face of John Jefferson with his keen gray eyes.

"I couldn't do it on my own responsibility," he said at last.

"Get busy on the long-distance 'phone," suggested Doodle. "Call a special meeting of directors and explain matters, and I'll await the decision. If your people don't buy, I'll promise you that the Great Soap Thief Detector will be known from Mindanao to Baffin's Bay inside three months."

Three hours afterwards the fat man returned, and picking up a pen he wrote a check in favor of Doodle for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which he exchanged for a deed, conveying all rights in the Detector. He then stepped into the washroom, tore the picture machine from its hiding place, disconnected the wires leading to the soap tray, and ripped the film into a thousand pieces.

"I've seen enough of that thing," he growled angrily. "'Cleanliness is next to Godliness,' and the man who stops another man from stealing soap is running pretty near the sin line, I take it."

Then, with a final snort of disgust, he went out into the street, and the doors of Doodle's Famous Dining-rooms were closed. Doodle the Crank was happy and — rich.

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The Lie God Forgave.*

BY SUSAN KEATING GLASPELL.

F course — git up there, Adam ! — there's nothing good you can say about him, and no use pretending there is. Nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand there's something good you can find out about a man to put in his funeral sermon, but you'd have pretty hard work hearin' anything good about Charlie Stacey round this country. Looks like we might have snow 'fore night."

"It's pretty hard to believe," said the young minister, a trifle sharply, "that there's any human being about whom *something* good cannot be said."

"I admitted it wasn't the usual thing," commented the old farmer dryly. "Git up there, Adam !"

"You see," he resumed, when they were about half way up the long hill, "you've only been here six months, and I've been here since the day Charlie Stacey was born — yes, and long before that. Our place and the Stacey place joins, and all I can say is that if there was anything good about Charlie Stacey that thing somehow missed my observation. Gettin' pretty windy, ain't it?"

"If there is nothing good to be said about the dead," said the minister, striving not to speak hotly, "we can at least show them the courtesy of saying nothing at all. There is something — oh, it doesn't seem just square to speak against any man — no matter how big a villain — after he has lost the power to defend himself."

"That sounds well and good," agreed David Lowery. "I'm not saying these things generally. Generally speaking, I'm saying nothing at all. But I was just trying to make you understand that in preaching the funeral sermon of Charlie Stacey you've got no easy job on your hands."

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Stuart Linwood knew that was true enough. When word had come to him the day before that Charlie Stacey had been killed in a drunken brawl, and that it was requested he conduct the funeral services out at the Stacey place the following day, he knew at once that he was to get his first real taste of the hardships of his profession. Charlie Stacey was the village tough. He was leader of the crowd which occupied the chairs in front of the saloon and commented on the passers by. The young minister, who knew a thing or two of the world, and of human nature, had been quick to see that Stacey was not what might be called a good, square tough. He had a sullen, tricky kind of face, which made one feel that even his best friends might become his prey. He was a young fellow, younger than the minister himself, but for so long a time the phrase "as bad as Charlie Stacey" had been current around there that the length of his record seemed to add to the number of his years. The minister had stopped him on the street one day and asked him, jovially as he could, if he wouldn't drop in some time and see what they were doing up at the church, and Charlie Stacey had replied with a swagger and a leer that it would be a cold day when they got him at any such show as that.

"He was mean from the time he was able to walk," went on David Lowery. "It's not a case of a high-spirited young fellow bein' led astray. He was just born bad, and it's hard to figure that out, too, when you consider that his father and his grandfather before him were deacons in the church, and that his mother is as good a woman as ever lived, and come of good stock at that. The two oldest boys has got farms of their own now. Josie — that's the girl, married Joe Free, one of our best young farmers 'round here, and Will — he's two years younger than Charlie — is a good, steady young fellow who stays home and looks after the farm. Seems like Charlie got all the meanness of the family. Git up there, Adam!"

"How much farther have we to go?" asked the minister.

"Only two miles more — git up, Adam! They call the Stacey place seven miles from town, and this school house here is the five-mile point."

They jogged along for some time in silence. The minister was anxious that the long drive come to an end. It was not that he

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minded the raw wind, but something in the companionship of David Lowery irritated him. And yet he knew the old farmer was spoken of as one of the best men of the community.

The Iowa farms, stripped of their substance, had a forbidding look that November afternoon. The leaves had fallen from the trees, and there was a bareness in everything. There was something in the bleak stretches more chilling even than the strong east wind. Stuart Linwood wished with all his heart that the afternoon was well over, and that he was back in his little study at home.

They turned a corner, and a long, straight road stretched out before them. "That's the Stacey barn," said the farmer, pointing with his whip, "and the house is just beyond."

The young minister was growing very nervous. He felt he would rather face a large city congregation than get up before that handful of country people and say something about Charlie Stacey.

"How does his mother feel about it?" he asked, suddenly.

"She ain't got nothing to say."

He turned to his companion inquiringly. "Just what do you mean by that? Do you mean she doesn't care? — or that she is crushed?"

"Well, for a long time Mary Stacey tried to cover up Charlie's meanness. She was always making excuses to the neighbors for the low tricks he played on them. She'd say that his pa didn't understand him — she'd say anything she could think of. Some of the excuses she made was pretty senseless. But when he got to carryin' on so in town, and it was known all over the country that he was a general disgrace to his family and the community, why then she couldn't think of anything more to say, and so she just kept still. Of late years she never mentioned him to the neighbors, and when they spoke of him to her she'd give them to understand it would be more agreeable to talk about something else. So far as I know, she hasn't said one word about his bein' killed in a saloon. She just goes round making preparations, and saying nothing at all. Now, Josie and the boys is more outspoken. They don't hesitate to say they're outraged and disgraced, and they don't know what they've done that this blow

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should come on them. Everybody round here feels great sympathy for Josie and the boys. But Mary Stacey — I've known her all my life — don't seem to want no sympathy. I must say she's actin' queer."

The minister started to say something, and then closed his mouth tightly. "I never noticed until last night," went on the farmer, "how fast she has aged. She's not a day over sixty, but last night, after they'd brought Charlie home and she was puttin' the finishing touches to him — she tied his necktie over again, and combed his hair — why, it just struck me all in a heap that she was an old woman. I started to say something to her about the cross she had to bear, but she broke right in and asked me if I'd mind fetchin' you out today. Well, here we are, and I don't suppose you're sorry. It's turned raw in the last hour. Hope it won't snow 'till the funeral's over."

Within was the sombre excitement, the kind of hushed bustle characteristic of such an occasion. It was within an hour of the time set for the funeral, and many of the neighbors had come early to "help." They stood stiffly around in the dining-room and sitting-room, whispering to one another. To the young minister there was about them all a look of having come because they felt it their duty to do so. Their mien seemed to be saying — what he was sure they were saying to one another in words — that they wished to show the proper spirit and give a decent burial to even Charlie Stacey. Josie and the boys were meeting newcomers at the door, and he was somewhat surprised to find himself resenting their looks of grieved resignation.

He had been there only a few minutes when Mrs. Stacey came in from the kitchen and spoke to him. The woman's face was hard to fathom. She spoke very quietly, almost coldly, and yet, despite the homely dignity of her voice and bearing, there was a hunted look in her eyes, and about her mouth a kind of wistfulness — a something which caused a tightening in the young minister's throat. He found, after a minute, that she was looking at him strangely. He could not forget the look, and after she had turned away, it came to him that it was a look of appeal.

Josie and one of the boys ate dinner with him. They spoke freely of their brother, of how great a trial he had been, and of

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how they did not know why this blow had come to them. Something about them irritated him, and when Josie advanced the idea that perhaps it was the hand of God took Charlie before worse calamities could come, the Reverend Stuart Linwood was moved by an altogether unclerical desire to throw a plate at her. He knew they were disappointed in his not saying comforting things about the bearing of their cross. The giving of professional sympathy, just because it was expected, was one of his hardest duties, and he always found it difficult to talk with people about their crosses when he felt they were taking a pious satisfaction in the bearing of them.

He was sitting in the big rocking-chair in the sitting-room when Mrs. Stacey came up and spoke to him. In spite of the bent shoulders, the wan face, and the tightly pulled-back iron-gray hair, there was something gave a strange dignity, a kind of queenliness to the spare, unlovely figure. "It will soon be time to begin," she said. "If you will come in the front room with me now you can see him."

He barely repressed a start of surprise. He knew that what she suggested was the custom at funerals around there, but he had not thought of it in connection with this one. As she walked ahead of him and opened the parlor door, his eyes grew a little dim. He was quick to see the pathos in her demanding for Charlie those formalities of respect she had many times seen enacted for others.

Her dignity did not fail her. As she pulled back the cloth and exposed the face which in death bore plainly the stamp of the life the boy had led, she gave no sign, by word, look, or move that there was any incongruity, any need of explanation, in what she did. It was the hardest moment Stuart Linwood had ever known. He knew it was deemed fitting at such times to say something of the dead, but he looked down into the dissipated, heavy face before him with an utter helplessness. Something told him she would not care for platitudes or professional condolence, and he knew of nothing else to offer.

He was sure she felt his embarrassment, for after a minute she said, a little haughtily: "You notice what beautiful hair he has, Brother Linwood?"

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"Yes, indeed," said the minister, eagerly, "It's beautiful hair."

"He had the prettiest hair of any of my babies. It was beautiful before he was a month old."

"I'm sure he must have been a very pretty baby," said the minister.

"He was," she answered, quietly.

There was another hard pause. "He was very fond of apple pie," she resumed, her voice quivering, but charged with a hauteur not free from defiance. "I've never known any one who was as fond of it as he was. And he thought no one could make apple pie right except me. The last time he was out home I made one for him — I always did when he came, and as he got up from the table he said: 'I tell you, Mother, if there was a medal for apple pie, you'd get it sure.'"

The minister could not speak. His throat had tightened up. His hair, and his fondness for her apple pie! But she had fulfilled with dignity the custom of the hour. Something good had been said of Charlie.

When they began upon the opening hymn he was moved by an almost irrepressible desire to turn and run away. He wondered if they knew how plainly they were telling, in the way their hands were folded, the way their mouths were drawn, that they were there, not as mourners, but as men and women doing what they believed their duty. There was but one mourner at that funeral. She sat there between Josie and the boys — her head erect, her face very pale. It was the lines about her eyes which gave some faint idea of the struggle she was making.

At last he rose to speak. He read a few verses of the Scripture, and then he said a few things about how it was one of the laws of the universe that death should come in the midst of life, and of how hard it was to fathom the ways of God. He intended saying very little, and making that little very general. It was when he was about to make his closing remarks that his gaze fell full upon the face of the mother.

She was looking at Charlie's coffin. Something about her — he could not have told what it was — made the minister draw in his breath sharply and lean heavily against the table. He did

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not know just what it was the fond mother had expected of him, but he was sure that in some hidden corner of her heart she had — perhaps unknown to herself — nurtured the hope that at the very last there would come something to bring a semblance of the human, bring a little of feeling and of sentiment, to this burial of her Charlie.

And in her folded hands and despairing face he read the tragedy, the heart-break of it, all anew. He saw, as he had not seen before, how all the years which awaited her would be lightened — glorified — by one good word said of Charlie. She would stand that one good word over against the black years of the boy's life, and by the mystic logic of a mother's heart would some way make that little crumb of goodness outweigh the sodden mass of bad. About one good word she would weave an ideal and build up a memory. Little by little the hateful things would slip away, and there would remain only that one thing — enlarged, illumined, all-pervading. With a deep, warm rush of feeling it came to the young minister that, night after night, this mother had lain awake thinking of and praying for Charlie. He remembered what David Lowery had said of the persistence with which she made excuses to the neighbors. And then, when driven to bay, when it had grown beyond all hope of talking it away, how glorious had been the pride — the courage — of her silence!

The resolution to do it swept over him all in an instant. It came overwhelmingly, with a force not to be turned aside, with a clearness of insight not to be questioned. He had ever been a passionate lover of truth, but, standing there now in the presence of that lonely, hungering, defeated soul, filled with a consciousness of the fight she had made, and with an appreciation of the barrenness that was before her, it came to the young minister, came as a voice from God himself, that a lie which was poured as balm upon a breaking heart could not greatly offend even the spirit of truth.

It was strange how it all formulated itself for him. He did not think out the thing he would say. It simply rushed in upon him, and he could no more have desisted now from uttering it than he could have stopped the fast falling of the snow in the world without.

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"My friends," he began, folding his hands behind him and taking a step forward, "I have decided at the last minute that I will say something which I had intended to hold back."

The mother shot a frightened glance from the speaker to the coffin of Charlie, as though she would guard against any ill word the one who was sleeping there. She was quivering as an animal quivers when, after a long chase, it sees its pursuers closing in about it. The rest of them were leaning a little expectantly forward. He was going to speak now — they thought — of the life of Charlie Stacey. He felt it his duty — probably — to draw a lesson from the awful example.

"I have not lived in this community a long time," he went on, "but I think perhaps I knew Charlie Stacey better than you who have been his neighbors for many years."

He said it slowly, and a curious look overspread the faces of the listeners. The mother turned her gaze from her son's coffin to the minister's face. Doubt and fear and hope were in her look. Her lips were parted. Her breath was coming heavily.

"I had not intended to say it publicly. I thought I would tell it to his mother after this was all over. But I was decided now, in spite of my promise, that I owe it to him to tell you all."

He paused, and no sound broke in upon the stillness save the moaning of the wind about the unprotected farmhouse. The eyes of the young minister swept the little crowd before him, and then turned and rested upon the face of Mary Stacey. Two red spots had burned into her withered cheeks — her head was held high — her hands were clasped tight in her lap. He could feel the awfulness of her tension — that is why he said it so abruptly:

"Charlie Stacey had it in his heart to do better. His better nature was beginning to assert itself. He wanted to lead a different life. I *know* it, because he told me so himself."

Each sentence fell clear-cut and decisive — fell with the force of a blow. Every eye was riveted upon the minister's face, and from the woman who had all her life stood between Charlie Stacey and the world, there came one quick, throbbing cry.

"He came to my study one night just before he died, told me how he hated himself for the evil he had done against his will, and that he wanted me to help him to get away from here where

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every one thought of him as bad, and I agreed that would be best."

Mary Stacey had pulled her chair a little closer. The light of a wonderful joy illumined her face. Her clasped hands were stretching themselves out toward the minister. It was as if body and soul were drinking in the long-fought-for and long-denied breath of life. Half rising in her seat, she uttered a strange cry. It was exultant — triumphant, as though a something had burst around her heart and was letting out a flood of feeling. The neighbors were casting startled looks at one another. It was hard for them to credit it, but they were not given to questioning the word of a minister.

"I know that a fight such as he proposed to make does not admit of an easy victory, but I know that in the end Charlie Stacey would have won."

For a minute Stuart Linwood stood there, looking straight ahead. The tumultuous sobs of the mother, the first which had come from her, filled the room. He opened his lips as if to say something more, and then, instead, he turned and walked to the coffin, rested his two hands upon it, and prayed in low, appealing voice:

"O God, who knoweth the hearts as well as the deeds of men, deal in great kindness with the soul of Charlie Stacey. He was cut off before he could fulfil the better promptings of his heart, but we pray that you will reckon with him, Lord, according to what he had it in his heart to do, rather than in accordance with what he had already done. He suffered for his weaknesses, but he hated his sins. And that is why we pray that you will give him the chance in the hereafter to make the fight he was just beginning upon here. Comfort the sorrowing mother today with the thought that her boy, despite the slipping of his feet, had within him the promptings which make for manhood. Take this poor, storm-tossed soul unto thyself, Lord, and deal with it in the love and the mercy and the understanding which ever temper thy justice."

The words died away — the passionate sobs of the mother were stilled — and there was over them all a strange hush. It was out of that hush that there came to the minister, — suddenly, staggeringly — the consciousness that in a prayer to his God, a prayer

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uttered over the dead, he had voiced an absolute lie. Everything swam before him for the minute. And then something drew his eyes to the face of Mary Stacey, and the things he read there took from him forevermore all feeling of guilt. Upon the face which had been frozen with despair there rested now a kind of holy tranquillity. There was about her an uplift — an exultation. There was thankfulness, pride, and joy. The long fight was at an end, and over her worn features was stealing the softening veil of peace.

As he turned from her then to the rest of them his heart warmed to the thought that they were, after all, a kindly people. Their moist eyes and softened faces told that they would be quick to forget the wrongs Charlie Stacey had done them, would be eager to say the boy had never been understood.

And while the November wind piled the snow in fantastic heaps about the old farmhouse that night a woman sat in an upper room fingering a little basket of baby clothes. Charlie seemed to her as pure tonight as in the days when he had worn the little things she held so tenderly in her lap. She had already forgotten all she did not wish to remember. She had come into her heritage of ideals.

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Found Gold.*

BY MARK F. WILCOX.

IT did not seem foolhardy for Bradstreet and McClelland to essay the recovery of a six-million-dollar pot of gold that a fleet of five, backed by a powerful syndicate, had failed to obtain. Neither of them was in love, so no Crœsus of a prospective father-in-law compelled them to seek the wherewithal to keep up the family name and a brownstone front. They were simply in search of excitement, and the fact that others had been unsuccessful did not shake their confidence in their own ability to succeed.

The treasure ship *Dorothea* sailed out of Lourenço Marques in November, 1899, and as everybody in South Africa knows, the unlucky vessel was wrecked off the coast of Zululand.

It was on the fifteenth day of July, 1905, that Bradstreet and McClelland, in their eighty-foot turbine yacht, left Durban, where the collapse of the plans of the syndicate filled the newspapers and gave the adventurers their starting impulse.

There followed two days of cruising dangerously close to the Zululand coast. They investigated the Umhlatuzi Shoal, where, according to the reports, three of the syndicate's fleet had been lost in their unsuccessful attempt to recover the gold. The yacht poked a curious nose into the wild cauldron boiling at the southernmost extremity of Cape Vidal, but foul weather stopped further search in that direction. Riders, the captain of the launch, made for the open ocean, and the treasure seekers lost three days in wandering on the Indian.

When at last the wind died down to a zephyr and the sun shone dazzlingly out of a sky that glowed like a blue lamp-shade, the yacht came swiftly back to Cape Vidal, where the buried treasure ship was reported to be. About two o'clock on the twenty-first

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they sighted land, and, after a careful study of the coast, sky and chart, decided that they were about fifty miles above the Cape, and nearly opposite Delagoa Bay. Having shaped their course accordingly, at five, the cape of the seething cauldron loomed into view. From the north it resembled a long brown arm reaching into the sea, the hand treacherously buried except for a few knuckles, but ready to destroy the first victim that came near. Near the upper end, however, where the arm joined the main body of the land, there seemed to be a fissure in the solid expanse of black rock. As the yacht approached, this crevice in the sheer wall developed into the entrance of a small, land-locked harbor, and the adventurers were delighted. But as they passed the frowning headland they were amazed to find that another craft was already in the small harbor.

It was a tugboat, and it lay there calmly as though that mysterious port had always been its berth. It seemed deserted. From the open doorway of the rear cabin to the smoky windows of the pilot house, the newcomers looked in vain for any sign of life. An indefinite thread of smoke floated from the funnel, but it might have been floating there for years, so lifeless did it seem, and yet that scarcely visible thread stirred the blood in the bodies of the newcomers. Riders reached for the whistle cord and sent a hoarse blast ping-ponging among the rocky walls.

The signal stirred the tug. There was an answering shout, and several half-dressed men scrambled out of the cabin and stared sleepily at the new arrivals. One of them, better and more completely clad than the rest, came to the side of the tug and addressed Bradstreet and his partner:

"How do you do, gentlemen," he said, coolly. "I suppose we surprise you as much as you do us, but if you will only wait a minute, I think that everything will be soon explained." Without waiting for an answer, he coolly dropped into a rowboat and came over, leisurely and alone, to the yacht.

As he climbed on to the deck Bradstreet and McClelland had a good view of their visitor. In appearance he resembled the typical stage villain. Round, bullet head, black, bushy eyebrows, long, pointed moustaches and a cynical mouth were all there, while added to these was a large, livid scar upon his left cheek which,

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shaped like a capital J and curling towards his nose, gave him a villainous aspect. Such a character confronting the two treasure seekers — with a background of mysterious tugboat, vicious-looking men, and lofty precipices, that threw the whole scene into dark shadow — was suspicious enough, but when he said: "I have been looking for you for some time," Bradstreet and McClelland were as much surprised as if their visitor had informed them that he had built the harbor.

"We are certainly glad to know it," said Bradstreet, with polite sarcasm.

"My name is Garx," continued the man with the pirate-like whiskers. I am the agent of the Evans-Reese Syndicate and have been more or less connected with every unlucky expedition sent out to recover the gold which was lost in these waters. While I was conning the shipping in the bay at Durban the other day, with a view to sending out a last forlorn hope, I discovered your boat. I had never seen anything that looked quite so handy and yet seaworthy, and I knew at once it was what I wanted. I tracked you to your hotel, but there I found you deep in the discussion of the wreck, and planning a venture of your own. I saw that I had come at an inopportune time, for you would suspect me of being a fellow-adventurer and doubt my words as much — well, as much as you do now. I thought, however, that I had plenty of time, and so I waited developments, but consequently I missed you, for that very afternoon I learned that you had gone."

"Did you think you would catch us in that little tugboat?" asked Bradstreet.

"No, not exactly. But I knew of this cove, and I also knew that you would be hanging around this vicinity for a few days, and so, because I was foolish enough to hope that you would join with me, if you only knew the situation, I chartered the tug and started for this place. On account of the storm we had to put out to sea, and did not get in here until this morning. We were all so exhausted with the struggle with the elements that we immediately turned in, not one of us waking up till your whistle roused us. Now then, here is my proposition: If you agree to work with me, you get one hundred thousand pounds sterling."

"We are looking for six millions," remarked McClelland.

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"And you will find nothing," retorted Garx. "You do not know where the treasure lies; you do not know the danger that surround it; you do not know how to overcome that danger. Only two men knew all this. One was the pilot of the last expedition, and he is dead; the other is myself. Join with me, and you get a hundred thousand — go without me and you get nothing."

He was very plausible, and yet it struck the two that it was rather strange that he should be there in a tugboat, and McClelland voiced his doubt.

"Pshaw!" interjected Garx. "Did I say there was any danger in this millpond? You mistake me. The danger is not here, but in the gold hunt. You see the gold is not here, nor anywhere near here, not even in the whirlpool the other side of the cape. The Syndicate has led people to think that it was here, in order to keep adventurers off the real grounds. No, the gold is not here! It is at the Umhlatuzi Shoal, and there is where you will find all the danger and adventure that you will care to meet. One hundred thousand is what you will get if you will join with me. Otherwise, I repeat again, you will get nothing, and doubtless will lose your lives and your boat into the bargain."

Garx produced an official-looking envelope from his inside pocket and extracted therefrom a large printed form.

"You see, I am already prepared to make the contract," he remarked. "Sign your names here, and I will send the document home by the tug."

The unexpected, prosaic ending of what promised to be a most romantic episode was a big disappointment to Bradstreet and McClelland. As though the recovery of a treasure that had baffled five ships and their crews was, after all, only a matter of signing their names to a bit of paper! And yet that business-like contract was itself suggestive of mystery and adventure, while the printed form in the name of the Evans-Reese Syndicate spread boldly across the top of the page did more to convince Bradstreet and his partner that the man spoke the truth than his mere verbal protestations. McClelland, after carefully reading the sheet, picked up the pen and put his name to the bottom and without a word Bradstreet followed his example. Their new friend took the signed paper and rowed over to the tugboat, and in a short time

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he returned, bringing with him another man, who took the skiff back after Garx came aboard the launch.

While the tugboat was steaming out of the harbor Garx told the two more regarding the conditions that surrounded the recovery of the lost treasure. The spot where it had been lost was just behind a barrier reef of five tooth-like rocks, which at the lowest ebb would be sufficiently uncovered, Garx thought, to permit of the recovery of the gold.

They consulted an almanac and found that the ebb would not be at its lowest for nine days, but instead of returning to Durban, they decided to spend the interim at the Cape. This was a suggestion of Garx, and it seemed reasonable enough, as a return to the city would involve two trips along a dangerous coast, besides a good deal of unnecessary publicity at the metropolis. Furthermore, Bradstreet and McClelland found the bush back of the Cape teeming with game, and they, in company with Riders, the captain of the launch, went out hunting every day. But Garx and Williams, the cook, stayed aboard the boat.

Bradstreet and McClelland found nothing in the actions of Garx to arouse their suspicions. He seemed to be consistently full of business and books, and much preferred lying on the promontory, reading from a little collection of novels that the launch carried, to tramping over the rugged country after game. Williams, on the other hand, said that he had a defect of vision and could not shoot, but he made himself useful in looking after the game that was daily gathered by the three hunters. They did not dream that Garx would take the man into his confidence and use him in any scheme that he was planning against them. There was nothing in common between the two. Garx was an educated man, despite his appearance, while Williams was an ignorant cook. The latter called himself a Frenchman, but with his broken English, his greasy black hair and his goatee, he seemed more like a Mexican or a Spaniard.

Not until the sixth day of their stay at Cape Vidal did Bradstreet, McClelland and Riders learn how closely the two men had been drawn together. Even then it was only by the veriest slip of chance that they discovered the plot when it was already well hatched and working.

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The three had started early that morning on the most portentous hunt they had yet attempted. Some natives had reported the presence of rhinoceri about fifteen miles inland at the head of St. Lucia Lake, and they intended to make a two days' trip in an endeavor to secure the hide of one of these great beasts. As usual, Garx and Williams stayed aboard the boat. They were about three miles from the cove when they discovered that no one had brought a field-glass. Bradstreet wanted to return, but McClelland found that a nail had developed a disagreeable point in the sole of his boot, and he took the opportunity of returning to the boat and changing his shoes. He left his companions waiting under a syringa tree with the understanding that they would remain there until he returned.

Within an hour McClelland reached the Cape. As he climbed down the steep, narrow steps that they had cut in the side of the cliff, he was surprised to find that the yacht had been taken from her moorings and was now anchored less than ten feet from the shore, with a gang-plank connecting it to the beach. McClelland walked on board, wondering not a little at the change, as he thought there was some danger of the boat being stranded at low tide. Garx and Williams were evidently both away, so no immediate explanation was forthcoming.

McClelland searched the vessel for any trace of them, but found none. He was considerably surprised, however, in view of the strange position of the boat, to find the burners alight under the boilers, and, marveling over the happening, he procured a field-glass and changed his shoes.

While engaged in the latter operation he was startled by the voice of Garx calling out: "Now you set up the derrick, while I work on the pile."

McClelland sprang up and peered out. Garx was standing on the brow of the cliff and was looking inland. He was evidently addressing Williams, as McClelland soon heard the cook's voice in answer, but what he heard caused him to hastily conceal himself.

"All right, sir; but do you dinks we get 'way wiz gold zis night?" came the broken speech of Williams.

"I'm afraid not," answered Garx. "The stuff is heavy, you

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know, and will take a lot of time to load, but then we have until to-morrow night to work in, so we have all the time in the world."

McClelland was speechless. The two men had found the gold! Besides, they were planning to steal the ship and leave the three others stranded in the wilds of Zululand. His first impulse was to hurry to his friends and warn them of the danger, but on second thought he perceived that it would be impossible to get away from the boat without attracting the attention of the two men on the cliff, and giving them a chance to escape, besides risking his own life. While he was thus debating what to do, the voices ceased, and presently he heard one of the men descending the cliff. Glancing out of the window he saw that it was Williams, and as he had not determined on any definite plan of action he grasped his revolver and crawled under the lower berth in the stateroom, to gain time to think.

Here he lay half an hour, much excited. McClelland was a rather nervous man when threatened with danger, but when thrown actually face to face with it he could fight as bravely as any man. So he huddled under the berth while the cook busied himself in the storeroom.

After awhile, McClelland conquered his fears and crept out. Obviously the thing to do was to take the man off his guard and disable him with a shot. He was just creeping nervously toward the door with this project in mind, when he heard a shout from the cliff. Garx had returned, and once more McClelland scuttled to his hiding place.

The cook climbed up the cliff to meet his partner in villainy. There was an animated dialogue for a few seconds, then a silence, after which began a hammering. McClelland concluded from this that Garx had gone back for another load, while Williams had commenced his work on the derrick.

After another long period of inaction on the part of McClelland and busy pounding on the part of Williams, with an occasional word from Garx as he returned every fifteen minutes with a load of treasure, the cook boarded the launch and again walked into the storeroom. McClelland knew it was time to act.

All the cabins were arranged serially upon the deck, with the pilot house in front, the galley and the storeroom about the middle,

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the main saloon, where McClelland lay concealed, at the rear. All except the first three rooms had internal as well as external communication, so that it was possible to pass from the saloon to the men's quarters without once going outside. The doors were open between the saloon and the galley leading to the storeroom, and McClelland saw Williams moving about, preparing a place for the treasure.

Garx and Williams commenced to work the derrick, and McClelland, wedged behind the door of the saloon, watched the operation breathlessly. The great treasure that had cost so many lives came by bucket loads aboard the ship, and in his excitement he forgot the danger that threatened himself and his companions. To hear the millions come aboard, to feel the delicately balanced ship shift and tremble under the weight of it, and yet to realize that, unless he acted promptly, this enormous wealth, together with the ship, would soon be on the ocean in the sole possession of the two rascals, maddened the watching man. Yet the way out was not clear. Garx and Williams were both armed, and no opportunity occurred to deal with each separately in a way that would make it certain that he would win out in the struggle.

Again and again McClelland started forward, thinking the opportune moment had arrived, but each time he sprang back as the position of the conspirators altered so as to make his chance of success a hazardous one. And McClelland recognized the danger of taking the slightest odds.

It was well on towards sunset when the opportunity at last arrived. The treasure was nearly all aboard when Garx called out to Williams that he would climb to the top of the cliff and take a look around to see that everything was all right. The cook assented and continued his work in the storeroom, his back turned towards the watching McClelland.

This was the chance! When Garx had disappeared over the brow of the cliff, McClelland moved swiftly forward and before the cook was aware of his danger he was covered by a revolver.

"Hands up!" said McClelland. "Don't attempt to call out to your friend or you will get hurt."

Williams put his hands up slowly, and with neatness and despatch McClelland relieved him of his revolver and trussed him

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with a piece of rope that had been used in lowering the treasure. The cook was a coward, and whimpered piteously when McClelland tied him to a ring in the corner.

"Now," said McClelland, "when Garx comes aboard I want you to call him, do you understand, you scoundrel? Call him in here, but don't say anything that will make him suspicious or you won't live long enough to regret it. Here he comes now, be careful!"

McClelland climbed up and took up a position on the saloon doorway, his revolver leveled at the trussed cook, whose frightened face peered out of the semi-darkness of the storeroom. Presently they heard Garx descending the cliff, and McClelland lifted his finger as a signal to the cook to hail his partner in deviltry.

"Garx," called the cook, "Garx, I want you."

"Louder," whispered McClelland.

"Garx! Garx! I want you."

The voice of the frightened Williams came up like a shriek.

"What is it?" called the other, hurrying across the gangplank, and rushing towards the storeroom.

McClelland moved his revolver to encourage his prisoner.

"I want you down here," whined the cook.

Garx dashed past the saloon door, behind which McClelland stepped, and then swung himself into the treasure chamber. Next minute this heavy door banged behind him and the two were prisoners in the same room with the enormous treasure of the ill-fated *Dorothea*.

When Bradstreet and Riders, who had become alarmed when McClelland did not return, reached the boat that evening, they found their companion smoking quietly on the hatch-way. They inquired about the others, and the smoker tapped the deck beneath his feet.

"I've got them down here," he answered, smiling, "and the treasure is keeping them company."

Garx made a full confession next morning. He had found the gold a year previous, and in company with three companions, who subsequently lost their lives when one of the Evans-Reese Syndicate boats was wrecked, he stored the treasure in a cave and

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awaited an opportunity to seize a boat that could be managed by two men. The launch was an ideal craft, and he had followed from Durban with the purpose in his mind.

On the next day Bradstreet and McClelland finished the loading of the gold. The bullion was in little bricks, each covered with tightly sewn canvas, and it took them all the morning to get them aboard. That evening they started down the coast with tons of solid gold.

It was at the entrance to Durban harbor that Garx and Williams made their foolhardy attempt to escape. While the three were navigating the launch into the bay, the two prisoners managed to get free of their bonds, and leaped overboard. Night was falling, and in the darkness it was impossible to see the swimmers, but neither reached the shore.

The three treasure seekers found upon landing that they were not entitled by law to even a tenth part of the enormous wealth they had brought. Even the hundred thousand pounds promised in the document that Garx induced them to sign was not forthcoming, as the man had been discharged from the Salvage Syndicate some months before, and had no authority to make such a pledge. But the Company acted generously — they paid each of the three men one hundred thousand dollars.

And so the *Dorothea's* treasure was at last forwarded to its rightful owners, and peace reigned once more along the coast of Zululand.

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The Mission of the Limp Man.*

BY MARY GARTON FOSTER.

HE old stone cottage occupied by Miss Judith Arnold and her sister Letitia stood a little back from one of the crooked streets of the English town of Deeping, its flower-bordered green-apron of a lawn supplying just the necessary touch of color to make it a complete picture.

Never did people more exactly match their home. Miss Judith — the elder by some years — was grim and old-fashioned, like the cottage, while Miss Letitia corresponded with the garden, being bright and fresh and attractive.

In all their lives, only once had a real disagreement ever arisen between these sisters. The occasion had been two years previous, when Mathew Dobbs — junior partner in the firm of Dobbs Bros., boot manufacturers of Deeping — on the eve of a sudden departure to Australia for an uncertain period, had written and boldly (Miss Judith said impertinently) proposed for the hand of Miss Letitia.

Miss Judith's circle of acquaintance being small and select, Mr. Dobbs was, personally, a stranger to her. This fact, together with a deep-rooted prejudice against "trade" in general, were the shoals destined to obstruct the course of true love for gentle Miss Letitia.

The subject had never since been alluded to — in words — between them, but its ghost rose at regular intervals in the shape of an innocent-looking letter, at sight of which Miss Judith's faded cheeks were wont to grow visibly paler, and Miss Letitia's pink ones a shade more roseate.

One morning, just after breakfast, the ghost made its appearance. It was a little before its usual time of visitation, and

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for once it passed unobserved by the elder sister, her attention being occupied with a letter of her own.

Mrs. Longstaff, the dressmaker, who had sewed for the Arnolds ever since Miss Letitia wore short frocks, and whose friendly interest extended far beyond her work, was employed that day remodeling one of Miss Judith's gowns, and as she plied her scissors she heard Miss Letitia sigh long and deeply, and knew the sigh was for the absent lover.

"Never mind, my dear," she said. "Everything will come round right, in time. Miss Judith will give way when the time comes."

Miss Letitia rose and softly closed the sewing-room door.

"Mrs. Longstaff, you can't think what a state of mind I'm in. I've had a letter this morning and he's on his way to England! He says he will insist upon a personal interview with Sister." If Miss Letitia had stated that her lover intended exposing himself to some deadly peril her voice could hardly have been more troubled. "I'm sure she'll never consent to meet him, and they're both so determined that I don't know what the consequence will be."

"The consequence will be, my dear," replied Mrs. Longstaff, in the tone of a judge rendering a final decision, "that you'll marry 'im, and you'll all be comfortable and 'appy together."

"Sh—" whispered Miss Letitia, and at that moment the door opened.

"Letitia, I should like to speak to you." It was Miss Judith's voice, and in response, the younger sister left the room and followed her to the library. Miss Judith was obviously disturbed about something, and Miss Letitia, slipping into a seat in the shadow of a tall bookcase, lifted Dizzy — the family cat — to her lap and waited for what was to come.

"I've had a letter from our agent," began Miss Judith, "and he writes that there are details in connection with our interests that require the presence of both of us in London for a few days."

Miss Letitia breathed a fluttering sigh of relief, but she was startled nevertheless. Never within her recollection had Miss Judith left the cottage for a night.

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"How can we go — both of us?" she stammered.

"I've planned everything," answered her sister, "we need be away only one night. I've thought it out, and I've a plan that will insure the safety of the house against thieves. Listen, and give me your advice."

Miss Letitia knew quite well that when her sister reached the point of asking advice, her mind was firmly made up, so she silently waited for the disclosure of the plan which was that — in order that no one should be aware that the cottage was left unoccupied — the blinds be left raised, and the effigy of a man be placed where it could be seen in the front room.

"Where are you going to get the m — the effigy?" inquired Miss Letitia.

"We must make it. There's a suit of poor Papa's clothes in the camphorwood chest. After Mrs. Longstaff has gone home we'll get it out and — and prepare it."

Later in the day the program, as proposed by Miss Judith, was carried out. Sarah was of necessity taken into confidence, and assisted — with much secret enjoyment — in the preparation of the effigy which, when completed, was duly carried into the front room and placed in an armchair at the side of the fireplace.

"It looks that lifelike," announced Sarah, sent to observe the effect from outside — "that unbeknown, it would have given me a turn."

The plate closet was securely locked before they retired, and early the next morning, after providing food and drink in sufficient quantity for Dizzy's need, the sisters and their maid quietly left the cottage.

Shortly before tea-time next day an errand boy was called by a gentleman to carry a letter to the Arnold cottage, with orders to wait for a reply. Half an hour later he returned it undelivered, stating that although some one was in, for he could see "a deaf old party" sitting in the front room, he could get no response to his ring; upon which, his patron instructed him to report an hour later and go again.

Just as dusk was settling over the town Mrs. Longstaff passed through the cottage gate-way, but was brought suddenly

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to a standstill by the unexpected sight of a boy standing at one of the low front windows, peering in.

"There's some'at wrong in yon room," he replied to Mrs. Longstaff's inquiry what he was up to. "Just afore tea-time a deaf old gent wor asittin' in a chair by the hearth; and now 'e's alyin' head down, o'er the chair's arm."

"Nonsense! you're mad!" Mrs. Longstaff's voice was loud and angry, but she peered in at the window herself, after vigorously ringing the bell.

Her strained sight could distinguish a dark mass at the fireplace, but its form could not be determined. The only sign of life was the plump shape of Dizzy, who appeared at the inside window-sill curving his body and rubbing his head in the friendliest manner against the pane, close to Mrs. Longstaff's face.

Mrs. Longstaff was mystified. She was familiar enough with the habits of the sisters to know that they rarely entertained a male visitor, but that the cottage was never left unoccupied.

Her talk with the messenger boy attracted the attention of the passers-by, and in a few minutes a small group had gathered. The boy's tale was repeated from one to another, and soon the neat flower bed beneath the windows was trampled down in vain efforts to satisfy curiosity by peering into the front room.

Mrs. Longstaff rose to the occasion.

"Run for the constable!" she said to the boy.

Reinforcements rapidly arriving, the group increased until the lawn was soon half covered by a curious, waiting throng.

A little later in the growing dusk three women came along the crooked street, from the direction of the railway station. At sight of the crowd upon the lawn they paused, and then the tall figure of Miss Judith advanced towards the steps, the two others following.

As the full realization of the situation came to Miss Judith, her consternation was too great for speech. She drew back toward the gate, followed by her sister and Sarah, and for a few seconds all three stood trembling in silence. A picture of the breaking open of the house; the finding of the effigy; the

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scoffing of the rude, disappointed crowd, passed before her. The thought of the humiliation that would follow the disclosure of her innocent plan to protect the cottage was crushing.

"Here comes the constable!" shouted a voice from the crowd.

She felt the words to be the signal for the approach of the crisis of her abasement, and her pride rose to action. She moved quickly forward, and as the man reached the top of the steps leading from the street, she was beside him, with hand outstretched to detain him.

"I wish to speak to you a moment before —" she stopped, and then began again. "I wish to explain to you about — about —" but several of the crowd were at her elbow, and her voice failed.

The man stood looking at her, seemingly confused at sight of her agitation.

"I'm not —" he began, speaking slowly.

"You'll not have to break open the door," she interrupted. "Here's the key. But first, pray let me tell you about it."

"You're Miss Arnold?" The man lifted his hat, and something in his voice made Miss Judith feel that he was to be trusted.

Before she could again speak he put out one of his arms to keep the bystanders from too closely pressing, and with his other, drew her to his side, leading her, a moment later, beyond their hearing.

"What is it, Miss Arnold?" he asked, when they came to a standstill. "What do you wish to tell me?"

Miss Judith controlled herself, after an effort, and told the story in a few words.

The man gravely listened. If he saw any absurdity in the tale — if her method of protecting the cottage seemed to him at all novel — he uttered no word to betray it, and the dusk kindly drew its veil over any expression of his face.

"The crowd must be dispersed. They mustn't discover the facts," was his comment, when she had finished, and he mounted the front steps.

His darkly outlined figure could be clearly seen by all, and the buzz of voices in the garden ceased.

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Slowly and distinctly, as if not unused to addressing an assemblage, he began:

"There has been a great mistake made. The impression prevailing that there is a man in the front room of this house is false. The ladies have been away for a few days, and some clothing which was left upon a chair by the fireplace has been seen through the window and magnified into the figure of a man. Kindly disperse, at once."

"The show's over!" exclaimed one of the watchers, and gradually the crowd emptied itself into the street.

Upon entering the house, Miss Judith, as though drawn thither by some mysterious influence, made straight for the front room. Mrs. Longstaff and Sarah followed, leaving Miss Letitia behind in the hall. When the blinds were lowered and the radiance of the lighted lamp filled the room, Mrs. Longstaff, with eager curiosity, turned toward the fireplace.

"Well," she ejaculated in an undertone, as Sarah raised the limp figure and restored it to its original position in the armchair, "he is a rum-looking customer, to be sure."

"Get the tea as quickly as possible, Sarah," Miss Judith said, sinking into a seat, while Dizzy — whose attempts at friendly familiarity with the effigy had played no small part in the drama of the afternoon — climbed upon her lap, purring a joyous welcome.

"Where's Letitia?" she questioned.

"Miss Letitia's — er — helping to get tea," Mrs. Longstaff stammered.

"I wish you would be kind enough to call her. Sarah can prepare tea without her assistance." Miss Judith's voice was recovering its natural tone.

Mrs. Longstaff bustled about several minutes before obeying. Several more minutes elapsed before she returned, accompanied by the younger sister.

Miss Letitia's eyes were bright and her cheeks very rosy. The excitement of the evening had evidently affected her differently from the way in which it had Miss Judith. As she glanced toward the motionless figure at the fireplace, two persistent dimples settled in the side of her face next the light.

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"Letitia," anxiously inquired her sister, "has the gentleman gone yet?"

Miss Letitia looked about, as if not quite comprehending the question, and Mrs. Longstaff hastened to answer for her, —

"I think 'e's waiting about a bit till everything's quieted down, like."

"I wish to see him before he goes," said Miss Judith, "and apologize for my shocking mistake. In the excitement I thought he was the constable!"

There was a pause, during which Miss Letitia lifted Dizzy in her arms and laid her cheek against his soft fur.

"It was very embarrassing," the elder sister went on. "Only a gentleman could have taken in the situation and have come to my rescue, as he did. I can never be sufficiently grateful to him. I wonder who he is?"

"I don't think anybody thought of asking his name, there was such confusion." It was again Mrs. Longstaff who replied:

"That dreadful crowd!" Miss Judith closed her eyes, at the recollection. "Only for his tact and delicacy what humiliation we must have suffered! Mrs. Longstaff, will you see where he is? Ask him to come in. I must learn his name, for I may some day be able to show my appreciation of his kindness."

Miss Letitia dropped Dizzy as Mrs. Longstaff left the room. When the latter returned a few minutes later, ushering in the stranger, the younger sister was leaning over the silent figure at the fireplace.

"Here's the gentleman you wished to see, Miss Judith." There was suppressed excitement in Mrs. Longstaff's manner, and as the elder sister rose, with outstretched hand, to meet him, she went to the fireplace beside Miss Letitia.

The limp man in the chair became all at once an object of much attention. Miss Letitia changed the position, first of one arm and then of the other. She seemed oblivious of the stranger's entrance.

"I wish to thank the knight who so gallantly came to our rescue," began Miss Judith, in her most gracious manner.

"I am indeed happy to have been able to render you even so slight a service, Miss Arnold," replied the stranger, taking

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her hand, but sending a quick glance in the direction of the group at the hearth. Miss Judith observed the glance.

"My sister also is desirous of thanking you," she said, adding in a playful manner as she turned toward the effigy, "This is the man who brought all the trouble upon us. Letitia, this is — pardon me," — Miss Judith looked questioningly at the stranger, "I'm in ignorance of your name." But his attention was so fixed on the fireplace that he did not seem to hear. Miss Letitia was stooping to turn the figure in the chair. One arm was supporting its shoulders, and her face was in the shadow.

An uncomfortable silence fell upon the group — uncomfortable for Miss Judith, eager to express her gratitude, and annoyed at her sister's seeming indifference.

"Letitia," she said, a little more firmly. This time the younger sister looked up, her face all in a glow, and Miss Judith began to feel vaguely puzzled.

"Pardon me," she again began, looking now full at the stranger, "but your name — "

"Miss Arnold," he interposed. He bent and took her hand in both of his, "I wish to introduce myself — er — the fact is, I was about to call on you — and your sister — this afternoon, when — er — our friend here — precipitated matters." Just then the limp man dropped his head on his breast.

"I don't — think — I — quite — understand," Miss Judith slowly said. Her glance traveled from the fine, kindly face at her side to the figure in the chair. Miss Letitia hastened to raise the bowed head to its proper position again, and then drew near the two standing hand in hand, a tender light in her gentle face.

The truth dawned on Miss Judith at last. Her face flushed, but she did not withdraw her hand from the firm, friendly clasp in which it lay. With her left arm she reached and drew Miss Letitia's head to her shoulder, and as she bent to kiss the happy face there were tears in both pairs of eyes.

And behind them, Mrs. Longstaff, for want of something better to do, hugged the effigy.

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Morini's Orinoco Cuckoos.*

BY E. F. POWER.

A SMALL round table supporting a wicker cage stood in the middle of the stage, and inside the cage were three birds, about the size of pigeons and of a bluish white color. On the program they were mentioned as "Morini's Orinoco Cuckoos" and the audience watched them attentively. Morini's widely advertised bird act had been awaited with eager anticipation at The Columbia.

One man in the great audience was particularly interested. This was Professor Murray, the famous ornithologist, who occupied a front seat in the orchestra circle. He knew that all authorities agreed that the Orinoco Cuckoo could not be trained, or even domesticated, yet the announcements stated that the three birds would perform feats that would be impossible for even a trained canary. The professor was in a state of evident excitement as he awaited the appearance of the bird trainer.

Morini soon made his entrance. He was a small, dapper man, wearing over his evening dress a loose Inverness coat, and carrying in his hand a small gilt wand which he twirled awkwardly as he stepped to the footlights to address the waiting audience.

His speech was brief, but to the point. He explained that he had succeeded, after months of laborious work, in arousing the reasoning faculties of the three birds so that he could control their flight by word. They would fly in any direction the audience wished and come back to him at his call.

"They are known as the Orinoco Cuckoo," he added, smiling as he moved towards the cage, "but I call them the Boomerang Bird because they always come back to me."

Opening the cage, he placed one of the three on the wand and stepped to the footlights, the cuckoo remaining perfectly quiet.

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The audience now saw that the bird carried upon its breast a bright heart-shaped medal suspended from a thin chain placed around the neck. Morini explained that the three performers were so alike that he had adopted this method of distinguishing them apart, each medal bearing a different number.

"Now," continued the bird trainer, "I want some one to say in what direction he would like bird number one to fly."

There was silence for a moment, and then a boy in the gallery shouted: "Aw, send him up here to me — an' den get him back if youse kin."

A laugh ran through the audience, and Morini, smiling pleasantly, gently tossed the cuckoo from his wand and, pointing at the boy in the gallery, called out: "Fly up there."

The order had scarcely been given when the bird flew slowly but directly towards the youngster. With outstretched necks and expressions of astonishment the audience noted its flight. Here was a phenomenon that they had never witnessed before The bird was obeying verbal instructions in a way that amazed the most indifferent.

When the cuckoo was within a few feet of the boy's outstretched hand Morini called sharply: "Stop!" Instantly the bird paused in its flight and remained suspended on beating wings. It was evident to the astonished spectators that it was entirely under the control of its owner. After the cuckoo fluttered in this position for a few seconds Morini commanded: "Come back," and the audience received new evidence of the bird's intelligence. It turned instantly and flying swiftly back to the stage alighted on the wand held out to it.

Professor Murray thought rapidly while the audience applauded. Morini had accomplished the marvelous. With apparent ease he had performed something that every authority on bird life had pronounced impossible. Text books on ornithology were being blown to the winds by the actions of the little man in the Inverness overcoat.

The other two birds even excelled the performance of the one that had flown to the gallery. They started, wheeled, paused, circled, and returned, as Morini repeated the wishes of the audience, who tested the obedience of the cuckoos in every possible way.

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Morini himself never suggested in what direction they should fly — he was simply the mouthpiece of his astonished spectators. At Professor Murray's own suggestion one of the birds had come to him and alighted on his shoulder, and the miracle appeared greater than ever.

The professor left the theatre pondering deeply. The performance was a marvelous one. He had witnessed something that all his knowledge and experience had led him to believe was impossible, and he did not feel comfortable at finding his preconceived ideas shattered.

On the following evening Professor Murray, armed with an opera-glass, never kept his eyes off the birds and their trainer, but he did not discover the slightest evidence of trickery. His incredulous mind had caused him to particularly watch the wand, but this slight suggestion of fraud was swept away when Morini, in the final stage of the act, entirely discarded the little gilt rod, lifted the birds from their cage with his hand, and directed their flight with a finger.

In the weeks that followed the Orinoco Cuckoos added nightly to their fame. Other ornithologists besides Murray came to witness and wonder, but although the doings of Morini were opposed to all their teachings they could not explain the mystery. While insisting that the cuckoos could not be trained to understand human speech, they were forced in the next breath to admit that Morini had accomplished the miraculous.

Professor Murray sought the acquaintance of the little man at The Columbia, but the latter had no information to give beyond that which he nightly imparted to his big audiences. Every attempt to probe the means by which he obtained the strange power over the cuckoos was met with the one reply that it was only by months of arduous labor that he had made the birds obey his commands. The statements of ornithologists the little man met with smiles. He was combatting arguments with acts, and Murray recognized that Morini had the advantage.

The Orinoco Cuckoos were beginning their seventh week at The Columbia when Professor Murray, still brooding over the unsolved mystery, received word that his friend, Doctor Alfred Farraday, the noted scientist, had that day arrived unexpectedly from

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Paris. With this message came an inspiration. He would, without commenting upon the mysterious performance, invite the distinguished Frenchman to witness it in the hope that his eye or brain might suggest a solution of the seeming bewitchment of the birds.

Eight o'clock found the two at The Columbia. The curtain rose, and Morini had not reached the footlights when Farraday started violently and gripped the arm of his companion. "Come with me," he whispered excitedly, and fairly pulled Murray towards the door. Upon reaching the foyer he demanded, trembling with agitation, that a policeman be summoned. In company with the officer the two men made their way to the rear of the stage, where they awaited the conclusion of Morini's act. As the bird trainer, still bowing to the applauding house, stepped behind the scenes, he collided with the trio. "Arrest that man," cried Farraday. "He was my valet and I have searched Europe to find him." As the officer stepped forward the excited Doctor continued: "I invented an electric battery that so controls the waves of magnetic force as to move a metallic object at will within a radius of a thousand feet. This scoundrel stole the battery and by its aid controls the flight of those birds. His wand or finger ring is attached to the battery, which he carries concealed under his coat, and the metal discs attached to the birds establish the connection."

And thus it came to pass that on that eventful evening the Orinoco Cuckoos regained their liberty while their master lost his!

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Wanted—A Proverb.*

BY LEROY WALLINGFORD.

IT was Fernley who undertook the regeneration of Morrison. Fernley pursued new breakfast foods and the simple life, but he carried enough proverbs to fit any situation that stumbling humanity might get into. On this account Morrison attracted him. The majority of the proverbs appear to have been specially constructed for people who dig the hard rows in this life, and it looked as if Morrison was wrestling with a Panama Canal with only a blunt garden hoe to help him along.

The other clerks in Aaronstein's pitied Morrison, but they did not bother to acquaint him of the fact. They had a dim idea that pity and advice are poor things to offer a man who is wrestling with a heavy-weight drink craving, but Fernley thought different. He had tremendous faith in his proverbs. He loaded himself with them each morning, and he became a sort of human Gatling that fired adages at Morrison every time that unfortunate got within hearing range.

"The darkest hour is that before the dawn," he would whisper as he tiptoed up to Morrison's desk to collect the sale slips. Then, as the thirsty one handed him the bundle, he would add: "'It's a long lane that has no turning,' and always remember 'That the Lord helps those who help themselves.'"

Morrison was inclined to think that his lane ran in a circle, and he had big doubts whether Providence would cooperate with him as Fernley suggested, but he allowed the proverb-pounder to fire away without interruption.

It was on the days immediately preceding pay day that Morrison's condition became especially noticeable. At this time of the week the saloon exercised a greater pulling power than the

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restaurants, and as Morrison was performing financial handsprings in an endeavor to make cup and lip meet as often as possible till he received his pay, his physique suffered as well as his morals.

Then an idea came to Fernley. He tried to induce Morrison to buy a commuter's ticket at the restaurant so that he would be protected against hunger when the drink craving ransacked the treasury in the latter part of the week. It was good of Fernley. He picked out the weightiest of his proverbs, and morning and night he flung "The Lord helps those who help themselves" argument at the head of the suffering one. The drink demon within Morrison objected strongly to the prepayment of three dollars for food, but Fernley was insistent. He urged Morrison to make a fight; to stand up and let the Almighty see that he was in the ring, and finally the sufferer consented.

Fernley was delighted. Pay day came on the following Saturday, and lest the devil might obtain a jiu-jitsu grip on the morally weak one, he corralled his man the moment he was paid, and he never stopped bolstering him with the proverb that urged heavenly cooperation till Morrison paid over three dollars to the Teetotaler's Café and received in exchange a red ticket entitling him to twenty-one meals. Fernley once more administered the proverb in solemn tones, and then satisfied that he had outwitted the devil he walked gaily homeward.

On that evening Morrison's drink demon held high festival. It claimed the money remaining after his room and food had been paid for, and Morrison spent it freely, but he kept a firm grip on his meal ticket.

Monday morning when Fernley reached the office, he saw Morrison sitting with his head bowed in utter dejection, and surprised at the other's attitude he stepped quietly over and tapped him on the shoulder. Morrison lifted his head and two bloodshot eyes stared accusingly at the proverb pounder.

"The Lord helps those," began Fernley, but Morrison stopped him with an angry gesture. Fernley was astonished.

Morrison tried to speak, but his dry tongue refused to mold the words, so he grasped his pen, wrote rapidly and pushed the sheet across to Fernley, who read these words:

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"The Teetotaler's Café burned to the ground yesterday morning, and my three-dollar commuter's ticket isn't worth a tinker's damn!"

As Fernley finished reading Morrison gained the use of his tongue.

"If you've got a proverb that I can swap for a sandwich, trŏt it out. I haven't tasted food for twenty-four hours."

Fernley — well, fŏr once Fernley couldn't find a proverb.

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A Desert Episode.*

BY GLEN D. HURST.

THE setting for the last chapter in the life of Old Man Murphy was the heart of the Nevada desert; the time — the exhilarating but turbulent spring season of the year 190—.

The old man stood in the door of his cabin on the side of a rugged desert range, and in troubled spirit he gazed at a group of strangers moving about in apparent excitement on the light colored porphyry foothills that lay between him and the gray, parched flat in the deceptive distance. It was only at long intervals during more than a generation since the old man had lived alone in that cabin that any one disturbed his solitude, and this sudden invasion he resented. He had prospected and mined in a desultory way for so many years unmolested that he felt a sort of proprietorship in the surrounding country.

The time was, when he welcomed his fellows to the desert domain, but it was now long past. When he located the "Atlantic Cable" and "Nova Scotia" silver lode claims he felt that his long search for riches had been successful. Under the stimulus of visionary wealth his mind's eye saw swarms of treasure seekers burrowing in the hills about him and his own claims yielding bonanza. Then it was, he invited the whole world to share his discovery and good fortune. However, the small silver ledge attracted little attention and the district was deserted except for Murphy, who worked his own vein and never guessed the real secret of the hills over which he prowled.

The years went by and Old Man Murphy, growing more grizzled and bent, became morose and cared less and less for the society of his kind. As a young man he had left friends and family behind and joined the fortune hunters in the far-off western

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desert. Then he had every hope of returning soon with wealth abundant. His failure galled his pride. The years of brooding alone created a strange antagonism toward contact with his fellows.

Old Man Murphy watched in silence the activity on the hills below till he saw one of the strangers coming up the trail toward him. That was too much. He turned into the cabin with muttered imprecations on the intruders.

The stranger had come with friendly intention. He told a story of a great find, one that would have thrilled the old man had he heard it twenty years before. A shallow trench across the peak of one of the yellow hills had opened a vein of picture rock, literally sparkling with crystals of gold. Murphy merely glanced at the glittering sample of ore offered in proof and turned away, grumbling about the invasion of his district. The next day he packed his scraggy cayuses with provisions and disappeared in the direction of Excelsior range where he could be alone for a while.

Worn out with tramping about the mountains Old Man Murphy returned in a few weeks to his cabin on the "Atlantic Cable." During his absence a wonderful change had come over the district. All around him for miles prospectors were locating every foot of ground. Near the site of the original gold discovery a town to shelter thousands was building. The explosions of giant powder charges blasting the rock in a hundred shafts and tunnels kept up a continual roar. Miners dodged about in the smoke and dust, showing each other specimens of gold be-sprinkled quartz. From his eminence Murphy could count half a hundred automobiles, loaded with passengers, speeding in clouds of dust and sand along the three new trails through the sage-brush, all converging in the new camp.

The old man contemplated the change with heavy heart. His solitude was a thing of the past. A trespass he was powerless to stop was upon him.

A monument of rough stones newly placed on his claims caught his eye. He strode over to it and read the location notice in anger. With a vicious kick he tumbled the pile and tore the notice to shreds. Returning to his cabin, he loaded both bar-

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rels of his shotgun and took a position commanding a view of the razed monument and the two trespassing prospectors, who were working in a newly started tunnel, unmindful of the old man's presence.

"You fellers git off my claim. Don't ye know I've had this ground fer thirty year. Git — if ye know what's good fer ye,' he shouted hoarsely, much excited. The prospectors left their work to face the big gun leveled at them. They protested, argued and threatened, but Murphy's manner was menacing and his fingers twitched nervously on the trigger. They were compelled to retreat.

The prospectors made several efforts to get possession of the claim and replace their monuments, always to be met by the big shotgun and the old man behind it, who kept on constant guard duty.

When provisions ran low, rather than lend encouragement to the bountifully stocked stores of the new camp, Murphy made a night drive to an isolated trading post some twenty miles away.

Late one afternoon Murphy sat with the gun across his knees guarding his claim. Away in the distance along the route of one of the new trails there appeared a gang of workmen. His attention was attracted by the line of telegraph poles they were erecting. That evening he sat long in the darkness musing intently, and the next morning he put away the gun, fastened his cabin door, and skirting the camp was soon tramping at his best pace through the sand toward the line of poles. He spent the day trailing along with the construction gang.

A new Murphy came back to the cabin that evening.

The prospectors had taken advantage of his absence to replace the monument he had destroyed.

"Let 'em have it. Let 'em have it," he mused when he saw what had been done. He scrawled a few lines to the "boys," telling them they would be bothered no more and to go on with their work, and placed the note where they would easily find it.

As regularly and persistently as he had stayed on guard duty during the preceding days, Murphy now followed along with the line builders, watching every movement in the construction work. He stepped off the distance between poles, observed the

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number set each day, and in the twilight, in his cabin, he figured the number of days till camp would be reached. Each evening he checked off the day's progress, chuckling happily to himself if the work had gone better than usual or feeling depressed if some accident had been the cause of delay.

The work entered the limits of the new camp, which the old man had always avoided, but he gave no attention to the activity on every hand. Scores of passenger automobiles wheeled by with a rush, and freight wagons loaded with provisions for 7,000 gold hunters passed him unnoticed. A fuse hissed almost at his feet, and the explosion that shook the ground and sent a shower of stony missiles flying around him uncovered a vein of gold-laden quartz. A hundred eager-eyed men gathered to view the new discovery. The old man was pushed aside roughly, but he seemed not to care. He was watching the last pole as it was reared in the air and straightening up became rigid under the tamping. The crowds that filled the gambling palaces or jammed the streets and talked of rich strikes and mills and dreamed of millions, he passed through as though they were phantoms.

Let them dream of millions; what mattered it to Old Man Murphy. Had he not a dream of his own?

The last strand of wire was strung. The click of the sounder as the key closed told the initiated that all was finished. The operator was taking his place at the table when Old Man Murphy pushed through the crowd that filled the new office and leaning over the operator uttered an appeal that was backed by the longing of his whole soul.

"Boy, let me send the first one?"

The operator stared at the flushed face incredulously, then into the deep-set, now brilliant, appealing eyes. Scarcely knowing why, he answered the old man by stepping back. Murphy flung himself into the operator's seat and placed his fingers on the transmission key. The dispatch to be sent first lay open before him. It read:

> *"Crosscut on Baloon hill claim opened up four feet of high-grade assaying into the thousands. Withdraw offer of sale."*

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With hesitation and an uncertain "send" the old man commenced:

.— — . . — — . . . . —.

It was not the message before him. The operator looked worried. He advanced one hand towards the instrument to stop the old man, then as the message became coherent he listened intently. The receiving operator at the other end of the wire was puzzled to get this message:

"— will prove an additional link between the nations whose friendship is founded upon their common interest and reciprocal esteem."

Now the old man's fingers were tingling with the electric impulse of the instrument; as if by magic the old touch came back. He began the transmission of the copy before him. It went over the wire with the speed and precision of an expert. He labored under an inward excitement, a mystery to the onlookers. With a steady hand he sent dispatch after dispatch until the accumulated pile was exhausted. With the last click he opened the key and turned to the crowd, triumph and satisfaction in every feature of the rugged, time-worn face.

"Boys," he said, "this is a great day — a great day fer the desert — an' fer me. How I hated to see you fellers come, — but I didn't know ye was goin' to bring this — I didn't know it. I've been holdin' down a claim in this district fer near thirty years, boys — I'm kind o' shriveled up body an' soul bein' here so much alone an' I wanted to be let alone till the end," then he addressed the operator.

"Ye thought somethin' was wrong when I sent out that first message didn't ye? This desert has laid between me an' that message fer forty years. It's a long time, boys, since I was counted on as one of the best operators in the country. That was in the late fifties when the telegraph was new. I was so good at operatin' that when the first cable was laid I was put in th' service. That was a great day too fer me, an' I relayed that message from Queen Victoria to the President. It was the first one sent across. A few years afterward I got th' gold

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fever an' I've been on the desert ever since, but I never forgot that message and I just had to send it out first to get my bearin's. An' to think this thing has followed me and found me in the desert after forty years."

The excitement that sustained the old man was passing.

"But now I'm glad ye come. I'm satisfied, boys — I'm satisfied."

The eyes dulled, the lips twitched in an effort to speak, and the head drooped. Old Man Murphy was seized with a paralysis — a paralysis of death.

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"CATECHISMS"

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

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I have heard of short girls making themselves longer by the use of high heels, chair cushions, and foot stools, but is there any way that a long girl can make herself shorter? Being almost two heads taller than any of my friends I am so mortified that I dare not give any dinner parties because I must either run the risk of getting my extremities all tangled up with those of guests next or opposite to me or sit so far from the table as to spill food into my lap. — FRANCES.

In the best society one overcomes the difficulty as follows: — In the floor in front of your chair cut a hole twelve by eighteen inches. Over this opening cut the rug on three sides, thus forming a flap, which is kept down with a ball and socket fastener when not in use. In seating yourself at the table carelessly stoop down and under the pretence of picking up a pin, unbutton the flap with deft fingers and permit your feet to dangle in space. In case the limbs are of such lavish length as to project into the cellar a swinging foot rest with a hot water bottle should be provided there during the winter months.

My Sunday School class want me to tell them an original fish story. Will you suggest one that points a moral? — ALBERTA.

Here is one that points two morals. One Sunday morning in October, while Mrs. Araminta Kerflum of Googe Hill, Maine, was preparing the usual breakfast of beans, she told her husband Tobias of a strange vision she had during the previous night. Some one, she dreamt, had that very Sunday evening presented her with a string of fine trout, and at last her long cherished wish that for once in her life she might eat her fill of fresh fish was to be realized. This reminded her husband of a strange dream he had had. Awakened by the thunder, he sat up in bed, he said, and looking in the direction of Wild River during a vivid flash of lightning, he saw that *it rained fish!* He distinctly recalled seeing live brook trout mingling in mid air with the falling torrents. To his wife's hint that he must have lost his mind coming home from lodge meeting he replied that perhaps he had and that he had a mind to go out after breakfast with hook and line and look for it. Araminta, being a God-fearing woman, suggested that he better leave his fish basket at home or folks would talk about desecrating the Sabbath. And thus it came to pass that Tobias Kerflum went fishing and Araminta Kerflum went to church. After explaining to the congregation that her husband couldn't come as he had gone in search of something he had lost, Araminta prayed that Tobias might have good luck. That night when the husband returned his coat pockets bulged out like toy balloons. Not until he had proudly placed twenty-seven speckled beauties on a platter before her did Araminta find speech to exclaim, "Praised be he!" "But look!" she added excitedly, "this one is still alive." The words had hardly passed her lips when the largest trout wriggled himself free from his dead companions and right before their eyes leaped to the clock shelf where he complacently began eating an apple that laid there. With bulging

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eyes the Kerflums stood speechless watching these antics. Suddenly the husband recalled that he did not catch this trout like the others, in the river with hook and line, but picked him up with his hand while passing through Cy Gammon's orchard in Hell's Half Acre. A peculiar noise in the grass having attracted his attention, he was astonished to find a fish quietly munching an apple. Tobias was sure that it was this identical trout because of a small scar resembling the letter H he bore on his back. As Araminta and her husband stepped toward the shelf to examine the scar the trout winked slyly and looked so cunning and heart hungry that they decided then and there not to eat him, but to adopt him as a pet. The childless couple soon became greatly attached to the little fellow who, although persistently avoiding water, thrived on his favorite diet of apples. Perched high and dry on table, bureau, or the melodeon, as he disposed of juicy Winesaps and Baldwins, he proved a constant joy to his benefactors. Early the following spring while Tobias was sitting on the piazza one day, waiting for dinner, he heard his dog bark at a woodchuck in a stone wall near by. In going to his assistance he noticed, as he was about to cross a small stream bridged by a thin sapling, that his pet trout which had followed him turned hurriedly back towards the house. That was the last time the trout was seen alive. After killing the woodchuck Tobias ate his dinner and then went out on the piazza to enjoy a smoke. He searched high and low, but found neither his pipe which he had left there nor the trout. Finally he walked slowly back to the stream where he had last seen his pet and eagerly scanned every foot of ground, but without success. Just as he was about to give up he glanced into the water and his heart stood still at what he saw. There at the bottom of the little pool was his pipe and near it lay the trout, dead. The thoughtful little pet, having noticed that his master had forgotten his pipe, had gone back after it and in trying to cross the stream on the sapling to restore it to him he had slipped, fallen into the water and drowned! Thus endeth the first lesson. Three months later, when Cy Gammon heard of this remarkable fish, he explained that during the summer before Tobias Kerflum picked up his apple trout it rained so little in Hell's Half Acre that the wells and streams went dry and a water famine prevailed. When Gammons' well threatened to dry up he decided to save the life of the one trout which had kept it free from angle worms, so he lowered his little nephew Hankey Mix in a bucket and asked him to bring up the trout and place him in one of the barrels of water Cy had prudently stored in the cellar. Five weeks later, when the heavy rain set in, Gammon requested Hankey to take the trout in half a bucket of water and transfer him to the little brook near by, which empties into Wild River. It was then discovered that Hankey, instead of depositing the trout in the barrel of water five weeks previously had placed him in a barrel of cider, where he grew to almost twice his former size. Having become accustomed to cider he entirely lost his taste for water and acquired a craving for apples because of the liquid they contained. Before transferring the trout to the stream Hankey, with the aid of a pin, scratched his initial on its back. Now one moral of this story is "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." The other is "Beware of strong drink."

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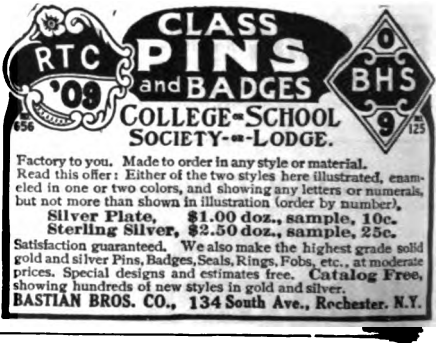

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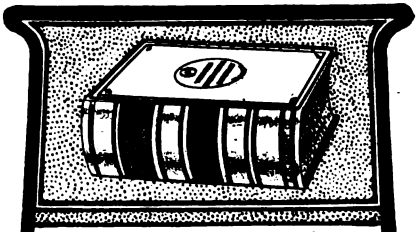

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AUGUST 1909

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Marion Hill

The Prodigal
James Francis Dwyer

The Goat and the Ghosts
Homer Croy

Conducted by the Deceased
Walter May

Mrs. Bilger's Victory
Emma S. Jones and Geik Turner

A Cupid from Prison
David Bruce Fitzgerald

Angel
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The Keeper of the 13th Door
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A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

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The Man Who Dropped Off.*

BY MARION HILL.

HE was a traveler whom activity of mind rather than restlessness of body impelled to seek the car platform at every stop made by his train. From that slight eminence, he good-naturedly exchanged remarks with all and any talkers whom sociable fate threw in his way. The information he thus chanced to pick up was all of a character to contradict the theories of life he had inclined to form at Law School, and was consequently extremely valuable,— which he was adaptable enough to realize.

This same generous adaptability induced him to look favorably upon all way stations,— whether of existence or of the more literal railroad track,— but the placid obscurity of Sunnytop proved too much for his regard.

"Lively, isn't it?" he called in cheerful irony to the one rail-sitter at Sunnytop depot, and he waved his hand towards the few low farmhouses, asleep in the noon glare, which constituted the town.

He was answered with perfectly courteous gravity by the sitter, a red-headed man in yellow overhauls, a man whose fortunate lack of education had wonderfully conserved his intellect.

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"Well, yes, it is," he admitted, proudly, but not unduly so. "To-day. Not in general, though. Are you going over?"

"Where?"

"To court."

"Court, eh? who's holding it?"

"Judge Kinney,— Jim Kinney,— know him?"

"No."

"Then you don't know how mad he is."

"Sounds as if I'm missing something. What's maddened him?"

"Holding court in the schoolhouse. It's cramping to legs and temper."

At this moment, just because his train was beginning to move under him, giving him no time to think, the traveler suddenly decided to visit Judge Kinney's court and therefore jumped lightly to the depot platform, letting his unregretted "accommodation" crawl cityward without him. Our not having time to think is responsible for all the interesting things which happen to us.

No one else left the train, a fact which was regretfully noted by the red and yellow man.

"I might as well have stayed to school," he murmured. "But Judge felt sure there'd be a crowd come and sent me here to pilot 'em back."

"Well, you've got me," said the traveler soothingly.

"Though it's tight fit enough, the school is, without any more crowd than what it's got a' ready." It is only the city mind which can be switched by jocular side issues; the country man sticks nobly to his theme. "Everybody's there."

"Why in the school-house?" asked the traveler.

He gave away an excellent cigar, lit one himself, and then trimmed his city stride to fit the more plodding gait of his rural guide, they both setting out by the one way of the dusty wagon road.

"Town hall burned down last night,— that's why the schoolhouse. Burned to the ground."

"Too bad. Loss heavy?"

"Several ton of good hay."

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"Hay! what was hay doing there?"

"Burning," answered the other. "Town hall was over the blacksmith's shop and barn."

"Ah," said the traveler, expectant of further items. But there were none. The barn was burned and that was naturally the end of it. A farmer narrates facts without journalistic embellishments.

As a possible furtherance to conversation, the traveler then tendered his card.

The countryman took the card and read the name:

Mr. Judson Jurewell.

Then he handed the card back,— done with it.

Jurewell pleasantly recovered it. "And your name?" he asked.

"Samuel Hanse."

"And what is Judge Kinney handling to-day, Mr. Hanse?"

"Trying to handle Aunt Bessie; but no matter how much he proves to the dear old soul that she ain't no wife of the dead man's and never has been, she only says, mild-like and gentle, the way she always speaks, 'Now, Jimmie, you know better nor that'. And so he orter,— marriage license go-hang. But, land, Mr. Jurewell, you don't know head from tail about it, do you?"

"No. Suppose you tell me as we go along."

This, Samuel Hanse willingly did, unfolding an odd little tale of farm life in which comedy and tragedy strangely mingled.

Forty years ago there had come to Sunnytop, buying a small farm there, Joe Cummin and his wife Bessie, hard working, honest young people who had no other ambition except to be self-supporting and respected in the county where they elected to live. This ambition they had fully realized. Childless, they had become father and mother to the whole community, being affectionately known as Uncle Joe and Aunt Bessie to the grateful neighborhood for miles around. Aunt Bessie had experienced none of the joys of motherhood and all of its cares, for she had devotedly brought up her husband's two troublesome step-brothers, Jason and Isaac Hull. Bad as small children, "Jase" and "Ike" had grown up to dishonest and thankless maturity, deserting the farm when the old people most needed their aid and

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coming back only after the old man's death, hoping to find themselves remembered in a will. But of course there was no will. Old Joe Cummin was without immediate kin and moreover had nothing to deed away except the undesirable little farm which he most rightfully considered was Bessie's as much as his, having been kept unincumbered chiefly by reason of her lifetime of hard work. As his widow, would she not naturally inherit the property and continue to live on in the old home, sheltered by its friendly shabbiness, nurtured by the grudging acres which would nevertheless afford her a sustenance? Why make a will? In looking for one, however, the hard-fibred Jase and Ike had discovered among the old man's papers a document which badly menaced Aunt Bessie's security.

In an envelope inscribed "Marriage Certificate" they had found merely an unsigned wedding license.

Interrogated, Aunt Bessie had freely given the information that she and Joe, wishing to save a minister's fee, had concluded that the license (costing the frightful sum of two dollars) was certainly binding and lawful enough, and consequently was all that was necessary. In other words, the couple had never been married.

Assured of this, Jase and Ike laid claim to the property. Aunt Bessie was nothing loath. She had worked for the two boys all her youth and did not utterly rebel at the prospect of having to slave for them in her old age. For she fancied that the extent of their claim merely entitled them to live upon her. However, they announced their intention of selling the place for what it would bring, quite callous as to what would become of the penniless and homeless old woman who had mothered them — and in speaking of her they used a vile name.

The epithet had struck poor Aunt Bessie like a whip-lash and had goaded her into fighting the proceedings.

"But she ain't got nothing to fight," concluded Samuel Hanse, sadly. "She admits all right that she and Joe never had no 'extra marriage' as she calls it, but she just peacefully makes fun of Judge and the others when they say she ain't no wife and she tells,— 'Boys, if I've been a good true wife to Joe for forty years, raising his brothers, nursing him and them when they was sick, cooking their victuals, hearing them their prayers, sewing

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their clothes, working myself to skin and bone for 'em, how can the turning up of the very license that made me Joe's wife undo it all now that Joe's dead? Boys, don't be so silly. Get done fooling and let me go home. I won't be there so very long. Can't Jase and Ike wait till I'm with Joe?'"

Jurewell had the pleased look which he wore when he was playing chess and was planning "mate in two moves."

"She admits she was never married?" he asked.

"Admits it plum out."

"Admits that she knew it from the first?"

"All along. Evidently she and that poor old fool of an Uncle Joe never got over shaking hands with theyselves for their thrift in saving a parson's fee."

"And yet she is innocent of wrong doing?"

"As a baby. Aunt Bessie is sure an angel on earth if there ever was one. That license looked like law and gospel to her and does still."

"And have not the two men feeling enough to let the queer old soul alone for the few years she has to live?"

Samuel Hanse spat in the dust. "That for Jase's feelings," he said. He spat again. "And that for Ike's."

"You say she nursed them?"

"Through typhoid. Watched 'em night and day for ten weeks."

Jurewell had drawn out a notebook and was jotting things down.

"And raised them from boyhood?"

"From babyhood. Jase was a year old and Ike three when their parents died and Joe and Bessie took 'em."

"How much is the farm worth?"

"Jase and Ike would be hard pushed to get four thousand."

The two had now reached the schoolhouse, an old wooden building from whose windows hung crowds of struggling rustics, testifying to the greater crowds behind them. Outside, children, dogs, and vehicles made the scene look like a camp meeting.

Pushing his way inside, Jurewell noted that a sort of intermission was evidently taking place, for business order was entirely suspended and a babel of talk was going on. Hulking big

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men, wedged in the little seats, kept their uncomfortable places, fearing to lose them should they get up to stretch their legs. Some few were making an unembarrassed lunch from huge sandwiches, taking unconcerned bites almost in their companions' faces. A proud urchin, barefooted and perspiring, who would not have sold out his stand for a million, was carrying around a bucket of water, and a tin cup. He was working twice as hard as there was any need to and consequently was multiplying his own enjoyment.

The Judge, a gray-haired man of about fifty, was seated at the teacher's desk and was pretending to take deep interest in some papers before him concerning the ever vital country question of boundary fences, fences not put up where they should be, or put up where they should not be. He was the only one who was not audibly espousing Aunt Bessie's cause, which had evidently been lost.

Jase and Ike having absolutely no henchmen in that quarter of the globe were reduced to the necessity of talking to each other, and it may be said that both had a most undesirable listener. They were intensely stupid men and made the fact more than patent by their constantly repeated assertion that they were too "smart to be soft-soaped by everybody who came along."

"Aunt Bessie" sat on one of the recitation benches. She was a tiny little creature, with washed-out blue eyes set deeply in a thin, spiritual face banded by hair so smooth and white that it looked like the demure linen of a nun. Her knotted old hands that never were comfortable in idleness were tremulously clasped in her decent black alpaca lap. She was of the type of women who can fight even all the foes of darkness when intrenched within the mystic solace and refuge of their own home, but who are absolutely stricken to the death when torn away from their familiar place; women who more tenderly love a geranium slip they have raised in a tin can than the finest blossoms that may be bought; women to whom each chair is a sacred family heirloom, each garden shrub a record of events, being either a monument to some hope's achievement, or a shaft to mark the grave where a hope lies buried.

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"Jase and Ike never planted the lilac hedge," she was saying, in a wondering tone to three or four women around her. "How can it be their place?" Then, slightly raising her voice so as to be heard at the desk, "Jimmie, *you* know who planted the lilacs, 'cause you helped me,— you was a little boy about ten."

"Jimmie" convulsively tightened his grip on his pencil, but gave no other sign of having heard the appeal,— not but what the sympathetic distress on his face showed heartfelt corroboration of every word she said. His duty had plainly been a hard one.

"Now Jedge Kinney — he's a man of good horse sense," Jason Hull was saying to his brother, both furtively glimpsing the eulogised one to see if the praise was effective. "Jedge isn't going to hev honest men cheated of their lawful due."

"And lawful it is," said Isaac, glancing scowlingly around in criticism of the general condemnation. "Who *could* the farm belong to, if not us, the sole survivin' relatives of brother Joe who never married and never had no children?"

"Jimmie," quavered Aunt Bessie gently, "can't you make 'em shut up? Don't seem hardly brotherly for 'em to talk that way about Joe, and Joe dead."

The tow-haired little Ganymede with the water having here come near to Jurewell, he gave him his card and asked him to take it to "His Honor," amending the title, at the boy's stare, to the more familiar one of "Jim Kinney."

That the name on the card was not so unknown to His Honor as it had been to Samuel Hanse was evidenced immediately by the expectant look which appeared in Judge Kinney's face as he raised his eyes to hunt among the throng for the owner of the bit of pasteboard just handed to him.

Jurewell met the glance and bowed profoundly.

"Have I your permission to say a few words?" he asked.

"Certainly, Mr. Jurewell," said the Court, not needing to request silence, for a curious hush was already established. Every eye was on the stranger who spoke so authoritatively.

"Your condescension in permitting me to speak is as great and unusual as is my effrontery in asking for the favor, but in extenuation let me say that great and unusual also is the interest

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taken by me in the circumstances of the case which has just been heard, your decision concerning which does credit to your sense of justice, refusing, as it does, to be biased even by the weighty considerations of sentiment and your personal regard for the parties chiefly involved." Jurewell was in the realms of pure guesswork at the moment, but, inclining his head deferentially to Aunt Bessie and nodding with scant ceremony in indication of the brothers Hull, he found that public opinion was with him and therefore proceeded jubilantly. "These — gentlemen," he continued, nodding again at the victors, and poising on the word so as to render it distinctly uncomfortable, "are to be congratulated that the law is no respecter of persons and has consequently put into their hands the power to recover the property that so rightfully belongs to them."

Jase and Ike, who had been slightly uneasy, now cheered visibly, undeterred by the dissent which quivered over the assembly, and by the fact that Aunt Bessie's pale blue eyes, which had been fixed hopefully upon the stranger, not unprepared to see in him a heaven-sent champion, had filled with heart-break and disappointment again.

"To the relinquisher of the property," went on Jurewell turning to her, "I have this to say: although in the eyes of the Lord and in the esteem of the community, there is no stain upon her fair fame, she being the most faithful of wives, the most honest and honorable of women, still, the law having decreed that she never owned a wife's position, the law takes cognizance of the fact that she therefore holds a valid claim against the estate." Tapping the paper upon which he had been making notes, but carefully refraining from explaining that they *were* but notes, Jurewell said impressively, "Here is a statement of the claim presented,— For forty years of service, as housekeeper to the late Joe Cummin, rated at five dollars a week, nine thousand six hundred dollars; ten years' service as governess to the half brothers of the deceased, two thousand four hundred dollars; ten weeks' service as sick nurse, two hundred dollars,— total fourteen thousand dollars. This is a just and lawful claim, the payment of which the claimant will certainly exact. The value of the property being but four thousand dollars, it seems hardly likely that

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she will accept from Isaac and Jason Hull a deed to the farm in equitable exchange, yet my advice to her would be to do so."

The fine points in Jurewell's presentment appealed first to the clerk of the court, a sunburnt young man in a bright pink shirt, and he emitted a prolonged chuckle, his Honor soon followed the example, finally the whole throng joined in, sending around the schoolhouse a laugh which rang as joyously as a cheer, bringing amazed resentment but to two.

"Monkey business isn't law," they shouted threateningly.

But Aunt Bessie held otherwise. Pressing to Jurewell's side, she took his hand and kissed it humbly.

"It's good of you, sir. Thank you, sir," she said, timidly. No further words could she find, but the big tears which rolled down her cheeks made words unnecessary. Then turning to the Judge, she dipped a little curtsy and said with meek determination, "Jimmie, I think I'm through here, and so I'm going home."

Quite refusing to bother her head with the ideas that Jason and Isaac might fight the case and that it might be long before any reversal could be made in her favor, satisfied that her friends would never shut in her face the kindly door which Jurewell had opened, she kissed again the helping hand, bobbed again to the Court, and then thankfully trudged out into the sunlight, her face turned towards the little farm where she had come as a bride, forty years ago, where she had lived with "Joe," where she had held him in her arms when he died, and, from where she had buried him — with clusters of lilac on his quiet heart,— the only place which could be "home" to her, on this side of eternity.

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The Prodigal.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

"IT comes to every wanderer at some time in his wanderings," said Galt, looking out through the dirty window of Bhatto Ghan's River Alley restaurant at Singapore. "It comes to every one of us drifters, and when the voice is strong enough we strike the home trail."

"Ay, ay," murmured Maloney, a little red-headed Irishman, who acted as agent for a Jew firm at Calcutta. "It's right you are, Sandy."

"There is no such person as a cosmopolitan," growled the big Scotchman. "I thought I met one once when we were jerking a trestle bridge over a stream up at Simla, but he was a fraud. He left one night and when I went round to his bungalow in the morning I found a little scrap of paper stuck in the thatch. It just read: 'Gone home to England.' Yes, by the axe of Bruce that was all — not another word. And that sun-tanned devil had been telling me month after month that he had neither home nor country."

"Ay, ay," chanted Maloney. "I've said the same, bad luck to me."

"I cursed him over-right, the Lascar serang," continued Galt, "but that old monkey-faced nigger told me to stop. 'His mother looked at him last night,' said he. 'His mother is in England, damn his brown hide,' I growled. 'It doesn't matter,' squeaked that old bag of bones, 'his mother has been seeking him for years, and last night she looked into his eyes as he slumbered, and he has gone to her. It is always so, Sahib. Some day the mother's eyes will find them if they sit on the rim of the earth, and when they see her in their dreams they go back.'"

Galt banged his glass upon the century-old table, and when

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Bhatto Ghan had delivered the drinks, a silence fell upon the group. The hot sun turned the street puddles into vapor masses that floated upwards, thick and stifling, and the voices from the café chantant came through in intermittent bursts as if they had seized favorable moments when the air was clear.

There were five in the party, and no man was within three thousand miles of his birthplace. It was Maloney's recital of an attempt he made to reach Cork that had caused the Scotchman to make his observations. The little Irishman had shipped as a stoker on a big P. & O. boat at Melbourne, but the red mouths in the bowels of the ship had eaten up his homelonging before he reached Colombo. There, Maloney deserted, and deferred the pleasure of re-visiting Queenstown till his pocket could pay for superior travelling accommodation.

Presently Meehlin shifted his long legs and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"That's right about the voice," he said, with the air of a man who knows that his assertion is incontrovertible. "I know all about the voice. I struck Wellington, New Zealand, in 1900; rode down on a leaking wind-jammer from Vancouver, and the voice found me the moment I was on the quay. One of the New Zealand Steamship Company's boats was just getting ready to buck across to Sydney, and the voice made me buy a forty-shilling steerage ticket an' hike aboard. Every mile of that trip the voice got to whisperin' stronger. 'Jimmy,' it said, 'you haven't seen yer old mother for seven years — seven years, just think of it. Never mind about yer stepfather, Jimmy, don't think of yer little differences with him. If he kicks yer again, like he did before, don't take any notice of him.' That was the tune it sang to me. Oh, yes, Galt is Johnny-on-the-spot when he gives lingo about the voice. It gets you all right. The one that called me was a sort of two-thousand-mile radius voice. While I was buzzin' about up round Seattle I didn't hear it, but the moment I struck windy Wellington, it fairly poured into me sound accumulators, and before we sighted Sydney Heads I couldn't get any sleep at nights because it kept reproaching me for stayin' away too long.

"The moment I tumbled on to the wharf, the voice swirled me up George Street to the railway station. I bought a second-class

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ticket for Bourke, and then went across the road to get something to eat before the Western Mail pulled out for its run to the Darling. I couldn't eat; felt as if I had a balloon in me insides, so I came back and cursed the porters until we swung out. All the way up in the train that voice made me sick with joy. The old bare gumtrees, the ti-tree scrub, the gray plains, the dusty drovers, every bloomin' thing got tuggin' at me heart strings, an' when I got out at Bourke I felt all sore round the ribs like as if some one had been slammin' me with sixteen-ounce gloves."

Maloney made a sound that resembled a suppressed sob, and Meehlin looked at him curiously.

"My dad had been a 'cockatoo selector,' you know. We had a little patch between two big patches, and the squatters on the two big lots hated Dad like poison. When he died, Mother married McCarty just to have a man round the place to give back lip to the boundary riders, and it was that little mean-souled son of a gun who snapped my home cable an' set me driftin' in the first place. However, the voice told me to forget all that, an' I tried to. When I announced myself that evening he pumped my right hand up an' down like a feller that's tryin' to restore breathin' in some guy who has been in the wet, but I took it agreeable, an' you could hear the swish of the wings of Peace when I was telling about me wanderings.

"Next day that little knock-kneed hound of a stepfather asked me to give him a hand in poleaxeing a steer, and I agreed to whip the pelt off just to show him I hadn't forgotten the game. I was three parts through with the job when the door of the shed opened and a mounted trooper covered me with his popgun. The voice wasn't doing much calling at that minute. You see, Stepdad hadn't a calf of his own to kill in honor of my return, so he had grabbed one of the nearest squatters an' that cop caught me red-handed. Cattle duffing had been getting too common an' they were watching round. The cop took me an' he took Stepdad, too, tied us one to each stirrup iron. That was pretty good luck for McCarty.

"They must have seen I was in a bit of a temper, 'cause they put us into two different cells, but there was a little hole in the slabs, an' all through the night that old calf-stealer kept asking

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me to shoulder the blame of the whole show. 'They didn't catch me, Jimmy,' he kept on saying, over an' over again. 'They only caught you, Jimmy.' 'What's the good of two of us going in? Who'll look after your mother, Jimmy? Who'll shear the sheep? Who'll keep yer little brother at school, Jimmy?' It wasn't the voice that pulled me aboard the steamer *Wairapa* that I heard that night. He got me that mad that I poked my finger in his eye when he was looking through the hole, an' I got a little peace after that.

"Well, that jury believed McCarty. They sent that old scoundrel back home, and a new voice came to my ears. It was the voice of the trail that called me day an' night for two years while I lay in Dubbo jail, an' when I used to look at the guards on the wall I swore I'd never imitate the prodigal son again. Those were the three kinds of voices I heard. First, the voice that calls you home, — the one Galt was tellin' you about; secondly, the voice of that old calf-stealing cuss in Bourke lock-up; and thirdly, the voice of the trail."

Maloney broke the silence. "Did you go back — afterwards?" he asked.

"Did I?" cried Meehlin, the arm muscles hunching under the sleeves of his coat. "No, I was afraid. I was afraid that I might kill him or that he might kill another calf. One of the two things might have happened, an' I would have got the worst of the deal. I'm off calves an' stepfathers for all time."

He stood up, stretched his great frame, and walked down to the water front where craft of all nations rocked in the yellow waters, their masts, like gigantic fingers, beckoning to stay-at-home folk to whom the trail had never called.

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The Goat and the Ghosts.*

BY HOMER CROY.

THE girl calmly reached into the bait-can, deftly attached a bit of meat to the fish-hook, and dropped the line into a pail of water. She leaned forward, peering down into the water in breathless suspense as if she expected each moment to land the prize catch of the season. Her jeweled hand held the pole with suppressed excitement. It was a pretty, athletic but still girlish figure. Over her face was a heavy veil.

A crowd quickly congregated around the girl and the bucket. The citizens of the sleepy little college town of Manchester became eager with excitement, and packed in around the fisherwoman. It lacked five minutes of midday; the spring sun glowed down kindly. It was just the sort of day to set one thinking of baited lines, shady pools, and of leaping fish. But the river was three miles away, and the nearest lake was at least ten. The water in the pail was so clear that the bottom could be seen quite plainly. The bait was the only thing in the water.

The girl jerked the bamboo pole with the quick snap of an accomplished fisherwoman. The line came up empty. Her actions plainly showed that it was a keen disappointment that the imaginary fish had escaped. She looked critically at the bait, then dropped the line again.

The crowd gathered in closer, but still the fair fishergirl was apparently as utterly by herself as if she were in the wilds of Canada instead of on the main street of Manchester, Iowa. A look of wondering curiosity flashed from one to another of those gathered, but no one had an explanation. A fleshy man whispered over his shoulder to a companion, "Do you suppose she is — ?" He finished by tapping his forehead.

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His friend shook his head vigorously.

The girl occasionally glanced at the clock on the courthouse steeple half a block away. When the noon hour began pealing forth she wound up her line, unjointed her pole and turned away.

An understanding smile burst over the face of the crowd, as the people began to take their separate ways. "A sorority initiation," said one. "Don't you see? It is one of their stunts?"

As the girl started off down the street, a pleasant faced young man from the edge of the crowd hurried up and raised his hat. "I beg your pardon," said he, "but I wish to compliment you on how well you did it. It was the best I ever saw, and my enthusiasm has moved me to speak to you."

The girl turned to him in wonderment, and removed her veil.

"You see," the well built young man hastened on to explain, "I saw your pledge button. My sweetheart is a member of that sorority, too. I already half way feel as if I knew you. I am a stranger here. I have brought a show to this town which will open to-morrow. I have trained animals, trick ponies and the like. I am a college fraternity man myself, but this year I am out with my little show trying to make enough money to put me through school next year. I have gone through those initiation ceremonies myself, so I can sympathize with you."

Miss Verna Avery had merely been carrying out one of the initiation decrees of the college Greek letter society into which she was about to be fully initiated. For a week now she had been doing all kinds of ridiculous things, such whimsical oddities as only college girls can think of. The day before she had taken her knitting and gone to the President's house, sat serenely down in the parlor, taken the ball of yarn out of the basket, and methodically set to work. The President's wife had been a little horrified at first, but soon saw that it was a sorority "stunt" and had laughed heartily at the joke.

The two fell into step. "Well, this is rather unceremonious," laughed Miss Avery, "but when one is a neophyte one does things a little bit out of the ordinary. But the worst of it is yet to come. I didn't mind that little exhibition up on the corner as much as I dread what is to take place to-night. I have

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to ride the goat, as we say, to-night for proper. I have begged the girls to tell me something about it, but they maintain that sphinx silence that makes one's blood grow cold. Every time I speak of what is to take place to-night, they shiver and look sorry for me. I just know they will do something awful to me."

"You mustn't let them frighten you that way," solaced the young man. "It is never as bad as you expect. I remember that the night before I was taken in I didn't sleep a wink."

"But you don't know our girls," said Verna Avery, gaining confidence. "I am so noisy and rompety around the house and play so many tricks on the other girls that they are going to make up for it to-night. Every time you don't do something they want you to during your neophyte period you have to make up for it good and strong goat night. Last night, after I had played tennis all evening, and was as hungry as a mythological bear, and just as I was sitting down to dinner, they wanted me to go down town — clear down to the post-office — after a two-cent stamp. I didn't go — I was too hungry. I am so afraid of what they will do to me to-night."

"Haven't they given you any idea of where they are going to take you?" pursued the showman.

"I know only this much — that they are going to take me to that old deserted house there," — pointing out a shambly frame at the end of a cross street setting back some little distance from the road — "and there finish up the ceremonies. That's where the goat comes in."

The showman whistled. "I've got an idea," he exclaimed.

The two turned off into a side street where the young man unfolded his scheme.

A long line of ghosts slipped in silence down the middle of the street toward a deserted, gloomy house. Two ghosts at the head led a shrinking figure clad in black. No straggling pedestrians were on the lone street; the only sound was the soft shuffle of a dozen pairs of shoes in the dirt.

A marshal ghost fitted a key, and pushed open the door. The hinges creaked dismally. Inside, in a big, deserted room, a circle formed silently, save now and then for the complaint of

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a loose board. Half sitting, half standing, the circle gathered around the helpless figure in the middle. One flickering candle set in a death's-head threw distorted, dancing shadows. The low, subdued breathing of the girls made the air fairly pulsate with tension and uncanniness.

One of the girls arose and stood over the candidate as she bowed with her head to the floor. "Oh, unworthy seeker after the shrine of Zeta," said as sepulchral a voice as the head initiator could command, with halting deliberation, "thou art now before the holy Altar of Rodolomas. In the tests that have gone before thou hast proved thyself worthy, but there is still one more test, a more trying one, a hundred times more difficult, that thou must pass through before thou mayest bear the title of Zeta." The initiator-in-chief paused a moment, while intense silence filled the house. At the signal all the girls held their breath. A rafter creaked, and each girl seized her neighbor. Then the low, suppressed voice began again: "Before thee is the cold, dry death's-head — bend forward — kiss it — then the Altar of Rodolomas willst be opened to thee. Now, if thou failest — "

A decided shuffle and scratching of toe-nails filled the room. The voice stopped abruptly, and pained silence held while something came in short, heavy leaps out of an adjoining room toward the girls. Two eyes glowed in the dark. The pale candle in the skull showed a furred animal leaping into the air, coming nearer every moment. It paused, sniffed on the floor a moment, its tongue licked up something, then it leaped again much nearer the hushed, trembling girls.

A series of wild shrieks filled the room, and with a common fear the girls flew to the door and tumbled out, and ran in mad, terror-stricken haste down the road. Not one stopped or looked back until the sorority house was reached. Even with the lights on they sat there in cold, blanched fear.

"It leaped as high as my head," declared one, drawing back into the davenport.

"I heard it growl," exclaimed another. "I am positive I did. It was a low, guttural growl, like a panther's!"

The door-bell rang. The girls leaped to their feet as if the

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animal might still be pursuing them. When the door was finally opened, Verna Avery was calmly standing there.

"It took you a long time to open the door," she said, complacently arranging her hair. She looked no more frightened than if she had merely walked around the block.

"But what — where — what was it?" echoed a dozen frightened voices.

Verna Avery sat down at the piano and exasperatingly ran the scale. At last she turned around, and seemed to be struck of a sudden with an idea. "Oh, say, girls, I have some passes for that new show that has just come to town if you want to go to-morrow. They say that they have a trained kangaroo there that leaps around over the floor and picks up lumps of sugar. The manager himself told me that it was very gentle and wouldn't hurt anybody."

"But what in the world have you in that pocket?" exclaimed one of the girls, pointing to Verna Avery's bulging side pocket.

"Sugar," smiled Verna Avery.

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Conducted by the Deceased.*

BY WALTER MAY.

HALTINGLY the members of the Carbondale Orchestra Club finished their concert and descended from the hall to their social room.

Fritz Liebknecht, the genial tobacconist, carefully deposited his cello in its case and looked around good-humoredly at the despondent faces of his comrades, his blue eyes twinkling behind his glasses.

"Vell?" he said interrogatively.

"It was a frost — a cold, white, hoary frost!" wailed Ellen Lloyd, the little schoolma'am, dropping her violin case heavily upon the table. The others assented gloomily.

"Why they not come no more to our concerts?" demanded Liebknecht, drawing forth a meerschaum from his locker and filling it.

"Well, why don't they?" echoed Griffith Evans, the conductor, gloomily.

Ellen Lloyd sat looking thoughtfully into the fire. Presently she spoke.

"I believe it's owing to Tom Marshall's death. He founded the Club. He always conducted at our concerts. Naturally, the people came to think that the club couldn't exist without him. They don't realize that he brought us up to the point where we could go on by ourselves. Grif is a good conductor, and we are doing good work — high-class work. If they only would realize, and support us! If they don't, we may lose our Club home!"

There was a dejected murmur of assent.

"If Tom had only lived, he would have pulled us through," mused Anna Marik, the cornetist.

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Here Paulsen, the big Swede, who played the trombone, took his pipe from his mouth and spoke reflectively.

"Tom just lived music! Many a time in the mine I pass the forge and hear Tom's hammer tap, tap, the iron — always a tune — always some tune that sing itself in hees head. I call out the tune as I pass. Often I am right."

"The Largo was his favorite always," said Miss Marik, reflectively.

"Let us blay dot Largo for gut night," suggested Liebknecht, reaching for his cello case. There was, however, no answer to this suggestion; so the old man paused and puffed reflectively at his meerschaum.

"Gott im Himmel!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Dass ist es, dass ist es! Ve vill do it, yes!"

Thereupon he reached over, and opening the case handed Ellen Lloyd her instrument. She took it and mechanically tuned the strings. The others made no move. He drew forth his cello and, reaching for the switch, turned off the electric light, thus leaving the room illumined only by the fire glow.

"You vill not assist?" he queried, looking around. "Denn vill ve do it allein, Fräulein Ella. Begin now," he whispered. Soft and low sang the strings in Handel's Wonder Melody. One by one the listeners took their instruments, and before the end many were playing. It was Ellen's violin which led, but so clear was their memory for their late loved leader, that to many it seemed as though he stood before them again, baton in hand, leading with the old familiar gestures.

"O Tom, Tom!" murmured Ellen, as she lowered her violin. "If you were only with us, you would pull us through!"

"He vill do it, yes!" exclaimed Liebknecht, waving his cello bow. "By der next concert! You leaf dot to me! Dot hall sall be pack full! Zey sall pay premium for de seat! He vill pull us out of dot hole! Yah, he vill do it!"

He began to pace excitedly up and down the room.

"What are you saying, Fritz?" demanded Paulsen, amused at the old man's excitement.

"I mean vat I say! You do vat I say und dot hall sall be pack full! Efery seat iss taken! Ve vill do it, yes!"

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He nodded emphatically and his comrades crowded around him, eager and curious.

"What will we do?" demanded Evans.

"Diss ve vill do. You vill lead us. You vill haff de finest program you cann make, und ve vill practise like der Teufel! De last piece vill be de Largo. Effery efening ve vill blay it mit de lights out and mitout notes. Denn, next mont', ve vill giff a concert. De Largo ist der last biece on der program. De hall iss pack, yes! Dey se dot ve are still alife, dot ve still can play!"

"How can you pack the hall, Fritz?" demanded Evans, sceptically.

"No, I not dell you dat, I do it! You leaf to me de advertising. If I not do it, I bay all dot cost, und, yess, I forfeit all my stock in dot club-house!" He nodded emphatically.

"We will all lose our stock, for that matter," said Ellen. "If we can't get the people out we'll lose everything. The mortgage will take it all. Say, Grif, let's take a chance with Fritz. We can't lose by it."

Griffith Evans, president and leader of the club, stood leaning on the mantel, staring moodily into the fire.

"What do you mean to do, Fritz?" he asked.

The old man came close to him and looked up squarely into his eyes. "I say noting! I do it, but I say notings, to you, to any man! Not till dot concert. You leaf dot to me. I do it!"

"I believe you will, Dutchy," cried Evans smiting him on the back. "What say you all? Shall we leave it to Fritz? Aye or No?"

There was a shout of "Aye."

Never had the club worked harder. Never had the rehearsals been conducted with such snap and vigor as in the days that followed. Even in Marshall's time they had never played so well. Evans gained confidence as the players improved and his conducting showed steadily increasing technical command. No one would think of failure, yet not one had the slightest knowledge of how success might be attained, of how Fritz would keep his promise. He said only:

"You do your part — I do mine, yes!"

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And after each rehearsal they would turn out the lights, and play the Largo. For this they had no leader. They followed the voice of Ellen's violin, and as she played she seemed to see before her the figure of their old director, Marshall.

At length came the day for announcing the concert, and as the men of the club started that morning for the mines they were not less amazed than were their fellow-townsmen to read the posters everywhere displayed. After the formal announcement was this:

SPECIAL:

The concert will be concluded by a rendering of the LARGO, to be conducted in person by THOMAS MARSHALL, deceased.

Black with the grime of the mines, and thoroughly angry, Grif Evans stalked into Liebknecht's tobacco shop, on his way home from work that night.

"What do you mean, Fritz, by such nonsense? You may be a fool yourself if you want to, but you have no right to make fools of us all! Everybody is guying us! What do you mean by it?"

Fritz calmly puffed his pipe.

"You vant to know, Grif?" he asked, calmly.

"Yes, I do!" exploded the irate leader.

"Yah, I tink so. More as fifty fellers haf been here already, yes. Dey vant to know! Dey don't find out! Nobody knows dat but me. Dey all come out to dot concert. Dot hall vas full! See?"

The big Welshman looked the little German in the eye.

"Well, Fritz," he said, slowly, "they will come sure; also they'll mob us if you cheat them. But it's done now. There's no way out. If you fail, the club is ruined. What are you going to do?"

"You vill see vat you shall see," replied the other, calmly smoking.

Evans drew a long breath. "All right, Fritz. I say 'nodings', but if I find you have been playing with us, I'll boot you down the main shaft of the mine."

Fritz nodded, quite imperturbed.

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Despite a blustering storm, the hall was crowded the night of the concert. Never had the orchestra played better, never had the enthusiasm of the audience been more inspiring. There were two solos only, Ellen Lloyd's and another on the French Horn. Most of the program was orchestral, and running all through the evening was a sense of eager, tense expectancy. All waited for the last, the Largo.

The hall was new and unfamiliar, and to no one did it seem particularly strange that the orchestra should be seated in an unusual manner. The director's stand was at the rear of the stage and the orchestra faced him, with backs to the audience. Behind the director was a drapery of flags.

With the last notes of the "Kaiser March," Evans stepped down from his stand, which was quickly pushed aside. Fritz Liebknecht leaned over and pressed an electric button. A beam of light flashed across the hall on to the draperies, and the other lights went out. Slowly, then, the flags were lowered, and on a white screen, thus revealed, shone the face of their well loved, but departed leader, Tom Marshall.

A brief round of applause followed, and even before it had subsided the picture changed, and before the surprised audience appeared upon the screen the flicker of a motion picture. A rustle and a murmur of voices greeted this, swelling into a perfect roar of applause, as the people recognized Marshall himself, stepping forward and bowing with grave dignity. A moment he seemed to pause and look around. Then, raising his baton, he signaled with the old familiar gesture.

Instantly the instruments were brought in readiness, and then, in response to the baton of their dead leader, burst forth again the clear high harmony of that grand orchestral hymn. From the first note to the last they played it through, looking into the face of the man beside whose open grave they had played this same piece months before. As Ellen Lloyd arose, in answer to his gesture, to play her solo part, the tears were streaming from her eyes, and, as he smiled back into her face, she could scarcely calm herself to play. But she did play, as never before! Then, obedient to his signal, the other instruments took up their parts, each building up a little of the melo-

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dious whole, which ends in that last grand chord of harmony. Then silence, and the figure on the screen bowed gravely and laid down his baton. The picture faded. A timid ripple of applause was hushed instantly, and the audience departed as from a church.

"It vas like diss," explained Liebknecht, in the social room. "I go mit him to New York; he see der Herr Professor. He muss to the hospital go, for to be operated. Der Herr Professor say true, 'You may be well, but also maybe you die.' He shall go in the hospital in two days or three days.

"That night ve valk down the Bowery. Ve go in von of dem nickel theatre. Ve see the mofing bictures. He say to me, 'Fritz!' he say, 'I would like dat I haf my bicture taken like dat, for de club. I like dot dey feel I vos not dead, perhaps, ven I iss dead. Ve vill haf dot film taken, Fritz, und you keep it, und some day, perhaps, you make it a surprise. I vill make it dat ve play de Largo.'"

Fritz puffed reminiscently on his meerschaum, and presently continued.

"Vell, ve vent next day to de bicture place und made arrangements. He said: 'Ve vill blay de Largo. Here iss de violins, und here de brasses,' undsoweiter; und he said it all so, und so; und he said 'Here ist Ellen, mit her violin, und hier sie steht ven see play de solo.' Nun! He took hiss baton und, — und, — vell, you haf gesehen! Dass ist alles."

There was silence when he finished. Then Ellen reached for her instrument. The old man turned off the light and all listened while Ellen's violin again sang Tom Marshall's favorite piece. As she finished she wiped her eyes with her kerchief and said,

"We all loved him."

And Fritz answered, "Yah; und ve still haf him mit uns, yess."

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Mrs. Bilger's Victory.*

EMMA S. JONES AND GEIK TURNER.

[This story appeared in THE BLACK CAT thirteen years ago and is reprinted by request.]

THE railroad had killed her muley cow, and the railroad had got to pay for it, — so said Mrs. Bilger.

Mrs. Bilger was a widow lady residing in the suburbs of Grafton, on the hills of Southern Pennsylvania. Grafton is not an imposing place. It is situated in a hole in the woods mowed out by the sawmill, which forms its principal industry. The business life in Grafton consists in feeding this sawmill, and, as it is not a large one, the town cannot be called populous even at its centre. The situation of Mrs. Bilger's place, in the outskirts, would have reasonably been called retired if it had not been for the fact that the P. D. & Q. Railroad ran through her front yard. In this way a good proportion of the population of the United States passed through Mrs. Bilger's dooryard. Few, however, stopped, except when some train got stalled at the foot of the grade before her house. The P. D. & Q. engines can climb almost anything but a tree, but occasionally in the winter they had to take two or three starts at this grade; it was the worst on the whole road. Occasionally, also, Mrs. Bilger had calls from railroad men, who stopped to drink at her celebrated spring.

The late Mr. Bilger had left his widow her small house and clearing, an eight-year-old son, a double-barrelled shot-gun, and her muley cow. A few melancholy hens completed the inventory of the estate. Mrs. Bilger, who was a woman of character, made the best of her resources. She herself tickled the shallow surface of her portion of the earth till it burst forth every summer into a sickly grin of scanty potatoes and corn, while her conscientious hens converted the minor by-products of the farm into

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marketable produce. Her main trust, however, had always been put in her muley cow, who had furnished her a good supply of milk, for which she found a ready sale.

This muley cow would probably not have taken a prize on fancy points at a cattle show; still she was a patient, industrious animal, and a good provider. But at last, unfortunately, the extreme scarcity of provisions drove her to night work, and she wandered on to the railroad track and unintentionally ran against a freight train in the dark. In the morning Mrs. Bilger discovered little more than a fine line of Hamburg steak stretching towards the western horizon. It was a particularly hard blow to her, because she was on the eve of accepting a flattering offer of thirteen dollars for the animal.

There was no doubt in Mrs. Bilger's mind from the first that the railroad would have to settle for her cow. So she informed the station agent the very day following the accident, and after protracted negotiations, which nearly lost the station agent his dinner, the latter agreed to forward a demand for settlement to headquarters. Mrs. Bilger didn't see why he couldn't settle for her martyred cow on the spot, but she was willing to make reasonable concessions. Her final price was twenty-three dollars.

So, after awhile, the station agent forwarded her demand to the division superintendent, and after awhile the division superintendent forwarded it to the division claim agent, and after awhile the division claim agent decided he would send out a man to look up the case. A railroad company does not take unnatural haste in settling up the claims of a poor, ignorant widow. This railroad's fatal mistake was that it did not know what kind of a widow it was dealing with.

It took about three weeks in all for the railroad officials to get around to Mrs. Bilger's case, and Mrs. Bilger, deprived of her chief means of sustenance, was becoming somewhat dangerous. She viewed with increasing displeasure the railroad men in general, and especially those who came to get water from her spring.

"Wal, ef they ain't got gall," she was accustomed to say to her Willie in this interval, "killing old muley cow, and then comin' here to get our water."

Finally she decided to give her ultimatum.

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"Here, you," she said, when the section hands came up one noon for their daily supply, "you get out of thar. You don't get no more water out of my spring till you pay for my muley cow you killed."

"What muley cow? We ain't killed no muley cow," said the astonished section hands; but it was no use to talk to Mrs. Bilger. The railroad had killed her cow, and to her the section hands constituted a part of one heartless and bloodthirsty corporation, which was responsible. They returned without the water.

The boss, a fat man, who had somewhat of a determined character himself, and who prided himself on his power of invective, was severely sarcastic on their return.

"Gimme that pail, I'll show you how to get the water." He waddled off with the pail in a truly ferocious manner.

Mrs. Bilger was in the house at the time. The section boss walked triumphantly up to the spring and stooped down to take up the water in his pail. The water was some way down in the ground, being confined in a shallow well, walled with stones, and as he was a very fat man, it took him some time to get down to it. Just as he was about to accomplish his purpose he suddenly toppled over head foremost into the spring with the graceful, tilting motion of a mud turtle falling off a log. Mrs. Bilger had waylaid him with her broom.

The section boss was a very close fit for the spring, and he made up his mind several times before he unwedged himself that he was a drowned section boss. When he finally did get out, spluttering and swearing, he found himself looking into the muzzles of a double-barrelled shot-gun, like a pair of opera-glasses. He fled precipitately without his water bucket.

Mrs. Bilger threw the bucket scornfully after him. "I won't take less'n thirty dollars now, cash down," was all she said.

After that it was vain for a railroad man to attempt to use that spring. She watched it most of her spare time herself, and when she didn't she had her boy out. Whenever a railroad man came in sight the child's little piping voice sounded the guard mount, and his mother came on duty with her gun. She didn't say much, but she just walked back and forth before the spring with conscious strength and dignity in her bearing, and deep, hard

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lines about her mouth. A great many railroad men who had thought they wanted a drink before they saw her, found that they were mistaken and turned away.

By and by, however, the section boss got tired of this sort of thing. There was a good deal of work that year, raising the tracks on that grade, and there wasn't another spring for two miles. Finally he decided to negotiate with Mrs. Bilger.

"That's right," said Mrs. Bilger, "you killed my cow and you've got to pay for her. She's wuth jest forty dollars."

So the section boss sought out the road master and told him about the affair, and the road master told the division superintendent. It had been so long since the division superintendent had heard from the station master about Mrs. Bilger's cow that he had forgotten all about it. Besides, it didn't sound like the same cow, anyway, the valuation being so different. So the division superintendent filed another report with the claim department.

Mrs. Bilger, not hearing anything from her appeal for justice, frequented the station at Grafton a great deal, coming in about train time and talking violently to the station agent. Finally, the station agent agreed to write on again to the division superintendent. By this time Mrs. Bilger's price was fifty-two dollars.

It so happened at this time that the division superintendent was off on a short vacation, and his substitute, in an excess of zeal, filed the third cow reported with the claim department.

Before it reached there, however, the division claim agent had visited Mrs. Bilger with a check made out for her first asking price of twenty-three dollars.

"Have you lost two cows, Mrs. Bilger?" said he politely.

"No, I hain't," that worthy woman replied, "only one; but I ain't going to take no twenty-three dollars for it. That cow will cost you just sixty-two dollars now."

"But she wasn't worth any sixty-two dollars," he protested.

"Yes she was, too," said Mrs. Bilger; "countin' the time I've lost foolin' over the blame thing the last three months, an' all I've had to pay for butter and cheese, sixty-two dollars 's cheap. Besides, you can pay it just as well as not; you know you've got the money. If you don't, I'll take it to the law."

Mrs. Bilger was obstinate, and the claim agent took back his

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check, and, acting on Mrs. Bilger's threat to go to law, sent over the first two papers on the case to the general claims attorney, intending to see him about it next day. Next day he was called off suddenly to another part of the road. While he was gone the second report from the station agent came along, with a bill for fifty dollars for Mrs. Bilger's muley cow, and, the department claim agent being away, was sent straight to the claims attorney. The three bills confused him.

"What the devil are they doing down there," said the claims attorney when the claim agent came back, "having a massacre of muley cows?"

It took the claim agent some time to explain.

In the meantime Mrs. Bilger began to take the bit in her teeth. She now resolved to suspend traffic generally on the road till they paid some attention to her. For this purpose she secured an old red flannel shirt, and hitching it on the end of an axe helve, began to flag all the trains going up the grade industriously.

"You killed my muley cow, and you've got to pay for her," she said, when the trains came to a standstill. "I won't take less'n sixty-seven dollars for her." It is not necessary to state what the train hands said.

The railroad men finally didn't pay any attention to her red flag at all, so far as stopping went, but as nobody knew just when she might decide to do something serious, like piling up a stone wall on the track, for instance, they watched that flag with considerable curiosity.

And at last she did decide to do something. It was one Tuesday night. She put the boy to bed early; then she prepared for action.

Filling two buckets from the half barrel of soft soap always kept on tap, and taking a bucket in each hand, Mrs. Bilger started out into the dark, and walked half a mile up the grade. Then she artistically applied her soft soap to about a quarter of a mile of the track.

The next train was a freight due from the east about nine o'clock. She was late that night, and she came down that grade for all she knew how. When she struck that soft soap she slid ahead like a comet rollicking through space; the engine rocked

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from side to side like a steam launch in a storm. The engineer saw there was something wrong in a minute, and whistled "down brakes" ferociously. The brakemen put on enough power on the brakes to lift her right off the tracks and hold her suspended in the air, but she just plunged ahead through the darkness, squirting soft soap on all the surrounding landscape.

"It's that damned Bilger woman again!" yelled the engineer to the fireman. "What's she done now?"

"Oh, my God!" said the fireman, thinking of his family; "how do I know?"

Then they both held on to the sides of the reeling cab and hoped hard. The engineer swore arpeggios to a sort of running obligato on the whistle. The train went by the station like a demoniac steam calliope escaped from a circus, with a frightened train hand hanging on the brake of every other car. When they finally stopped, two miles down the road, the engineer said he never had such an awful feeling in his life,— only he didn't say it that way. The fireman was quite seasick.

The worst of it was, they didn't have the least idea what ailed them, because by that time all the soft soap was worn off the wheels. They hadn't the time to look around, anyway, because they had to get down on the next siding for the through ten o'clock passenger train.

The express was extra heavy that night, and the engineer had a horrible rate of speed on her when she reached the grade. Nevertheless, when she struck it she stopped short within two lengths. To the wild dismay of the engineer, the big drivers of his engine just whirled around and around like a top. The engine couldn't get up that grade any more than a man can lift himself by his boot straps. Finally the engineer stopped her, and he and the fireman got out to investigate. Up the grade in front of the engine the rails, in the beams of the headlight, stretched in two strangely glistening lines.

"By thunder!" exclaimed the fireman, stooping down; "it's soft soap."

"Now will you pay me for my muley cow?" said a voice from the darkness. "If you don't, you'll never run your darned road again."

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It was Mrs. Bilger. Her price had risen to eighty-seven dollars.

It so happened that a very important person was on this train, no less important a person, in fact, than the president of the road. He was in a hurry, too, and he came out of his special car to see what was going on, just as Mrs. Bilger arrived on the scene.

"Well, what's the matter here?" said the president.

"Soft soap, sir," said the excited engineer; this woman's been daubing up the track with soft soap so we can't run the train, because she had her darned cow killed and they won't pay for it."

"Yes, they will," said Mrs. Bilger; "and it'll cost 'em eighty-seven dollars,— not a cent less."

Mrs. Bilger felt she was in a position to dictate, and she proposed to do so. The railroad president appreciated the situation.

"Well, my good woman," said he, "don't you think you'd compromise for a little less — say seventy-five?"

"Who are you?" said Mrs. Bilger haughtily.

"Well, I'm president of this road," said the great official.

"Well, then, I want eighty-seven dollars for my muley cow," said Mrs. Bilger, "and you don't get her for any less."

This amused the president considerably. He took out his fat pocket-book and counted out a big roll of bills. "There you are," said he, "I'll pay it myself." Then he got Mrs. Bilger's mark on a receipt before witnesses, in front of the headlight; and the muley cow was settled for just five months after its death.

After awhile, with the help of the freight engine below, the passenger train was pushed up the grade, the track having been sanded all the way up.

"That muley cow was a good paying property," mused the railroad president, as he seated himself in his special car. "If she'd given a barrel of milk a day, and had a calf every two months since the time of her demise, she wouldn't have yielded such large returns."

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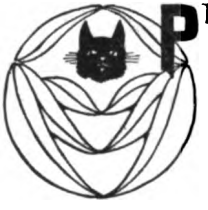
A Cupid from Prison.*

BY DAVID BRUCE FITZGERALD.



PELHAM SWAIN — millionaire by inheritance, artist by preference, discoverer of a new thing in decorative pottery, and engaged to the most imperious, most fascinating, most bewildering second-year-out girl of his set — had never in all his twenty-eight years received such a blow as that curt note of dismissal gave him. It ran:

> 542 E Street, February the third.
>
> MY DEAR SIR:
>
> I release you unconditionally from your engagement to me; and I return, by the messenger who carries this, all such gifts of yours as are in my possession. As our betrothal has never been formally announced neither of us will be under necessity of making explanations. It will be useless for you to call, or to address any communication to me, as Mother and I expect to leave to-morrow morning for a tour of Mexico. Your own memory will furnish you the reason for this dismissal.
>
> Very truly yours,
>
> To Mr. Pelham Swain. VERONICA VERNAL.

The artist pushed aside the accompanying package, lighted a cigar and set himself to think. He grasped at a hundred clues, only to find them alike in their failure to bring him to the light. He had been Veronica's true and steadfast lover. The girl had, to be sure, displayed an unaccountable capriciousness of late — but he had not dreamed that she was seriously offended, nor could his memory furnish him the reason for her displeasure. At last, wearied by the futility of the effort to understand, he gave the case up, and found himself perilously near the edge of that precipice men call "Despair."

Pelham Swain, some two weeks later, wandered, rather than directed himself, to the home of Miss Alicia Carlin. Rumor had once associated their names; therefore, being merely good

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friends, they had seen each other less frequently thereafter. Now the artist was vaguely aware that he owed Alicia a party call. Also he was interested in the welfare of Henry Tort, who, after a bad battering in a runaway, had gone cruising in search of health and was somewhere off the South American coast. Miss Carlin, if she would confess it, might have late advices of Tort's condition.

Swain was shown to the library, where his hostess laid down a magazine to welcome him. The talk ran, for a time, along conventional lines. Miss Carlin diverted it to personalities.

"Mr. Swain," she said, "Mr. Tort —"

"Precisely!" The artist managed to make the interruption significant.

"Really, you are wasting your ingenuity," returned Alicia. "It is no secret. Henry and I are to be married almost at once after his return, which will be in about six weeks. He writes that his health is quite restored."

"I wish you both every happiness in the world," said Swain, with a heartiness which left no doubt of his sincerity. "Tort is a fortunate man. I was once tempted to try conclusions with him; and, if it had not been —"

"For Veronica Vernal?" It was Miss Carlin's turn to be insinuating.

"No — that I saw my running would be hopeless."

"The Vernals must have decided on a Mexican tour very suddenly," said Alicia, bent on pursuing the subject. "Veronica was here only two days before, and she never mentioned their going. I think it was the queerest thing."

"I fancy they surprised a number of people by the suddenness of their departure," assented Swain. "I am sure, though, that Miss Vernal has had that trip in contemplation for quite a while."

He did not add that he and Veronica had planned it as their wedding journey.

"Oh," cried Miss Carlin, suddenly recalling the point from which the conversation had strayed, "what I wanted to tell you was that Henry, the day he sailed, sent me a vase, which I would like you to see. I know nothing of pottery, but you are an expert

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and can tell me all about it. Please come into the drawing-room and turn up the gas."

Swain complied, and, to his immense astonishment, found himself looking at a wonderful Dionysian amphora, the first and finest speciment of his own work, which, months before, he had presented to Veronica Vernal. There could be no possible mistake. He knew it, as a father knows his child. No other bit of pottery in the world was exactly like it. That iridescent effect — that strange luminosity, indefinable in words — those shifting striations, half hiding, half revealing the glow of a deeper, golden fire — those shining particles, swimming in an intense, elusive brown and seeming to gather themselves into the pupils of hungry, carnivorous eyes — had he not thought all these things out? And there — he looked at the bottom of the vase — was his private mark.

The artist's thoughts traversed, in a flash, the entire history of the thing in his hands. Because he loved her, even better than his art, he had laid this, the first-fruits of his labors, at Veronica Vernal's feet. She — as she told him — had enshrined it on a pedestal in the corner of her boudoir, and had drawn a red cord from wall to wall, cutting off the corner, lest it should suffer from the carelessness of servants. Later, wishing to make a minute comparison between it and some other specimens yielded up by his furnace, he had borrowed the vase for three days, and had duly returned it.

Swain's first impulse was to speak these facts out bluntly and, as Veronica's representative, claim the vase; but he allowed the moment in which he might have done this to pass. Afterward, a jumble of second thoughts kept him silent. What right had he now, more than another, to act in Veronica's behalf? Then, Miss Carlin had said, with evident sincerity, that her lover gave her the amphora. This was probably — was certainly — a mistake; but, until Tort returned and assured her of her error, she would never resign its possession.

The artist, with these thoughts thronging his mind, made a pretence of subjecting the vase to a careful and critical examination.

"A — er — remarkably beautiful specimen," he muttered.

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"The — er — glaze seems to be — er — unusually transparent. Made in this country, if I may — er — guess."

Alicia, whose thoughts were far enough from Pelham Swain, did not notice the paucity and incoherence of his remarks. She was a little disappointed that he saw nothing in the vase to arouse enthusiasm; but in five minutes, chattering away on the theme of Henry Tort, she forgot this superficial hurt.

Swain, back in his apartment, had a moment of clear vision. He knew now why Veronica had dismissed him. The borrowed vase had gone astray, and she had interpreted its failure to reappear as an intimation. Finally, seeing it on the Carlin mantel, she had concluded that he had given it to Alicia.

The artist touched a button.

"William," he said to the brass-bedecked youth who responded, "do you recall the fact that, some weeks ago, I sent you to deliver a large pasteboard box at 542 E Street?"

"Like it was yesterday," replied the boy; "only it was B Street. I handed it in to a cross-eyed girl, with red hair; and I got down the steps pretty quick, for fear she would hoodoo me."

"But, William, I wrote the address on a slip and told you to paste it on the lid of the box. Did you do that?"

"Nope — I couldn't find any paste, so I put the slip in my pocket."

"Let me see it."

"I guess it's lost," said the boy, after a prolonged search.

Swain dismissed William with a gesture. He saw precisely how the mistake had occurred and that it was largely due to his own carelessness. The homes of the two girls, though in different streets, bore the same number. The vase, in an unaddressed package, had been handed in at the Carlin residence. Alicia had supposed, on conjectural grounds, that it came from Tort; had, indeed, confidently affirmed it.

The artist, after traversing, as it seemed to him, an interminable labyrinth, arrived at some tolerably lucid conclusions. It would be unpardonably stupid to allow the happiness of his life to be undermined by a mere perversity of fate. Again, he would be at a distinct advantage if Miss Vernal, when she came home, should find the vase standing in its accustomed

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place in her boudoir. Swain could not overlook the fact that his fiancée had declined to give him a chance to justify himself. The first overture toward a reconciliation should therefore, as his pride told him, come from Veronica. But this were a vain expectation so long as the amphora was in Miss Carlin's home and Miss Vernal remained ignorant of the mistake which carried it there.

The man formulated a dozen plans, only to abandon them as impracticable. An appeal to Alicia seemed the only recourse — but it was quite certain that she would not resign the vase until Tort returned and explained. When Tort did return it would probably be too late. It was a plainly hopeless situation.

One morning, as he was reviewing the whole case for perhaps the thousandth time, an obscure paragraph in the newspaper caught Swain's eye. He read it twice, then cut it out and put it in his pocket.

"At five minutes before twelve to-night," it ran, "the portal of the State Prison, located in the outskirts of the city, will open for the exit of 'Cully the Crook,' one of the most daring and expert housebreakers in the country. Cully is wanted, for various burglaries, in half a dozen states; but, as he is finishing a ten-year term and it might be difficult to collect the evidence against him, he will probably be allowed his freedom."

The artist spent the day wrestling with conscience and fear; and conquered them, as a desperate man will. After dinner, with a slouch hat drawn down to his eyes, he walked over to the east side of the city and hailed a cab. Two hours past midnight he returned to his apartments, accompanied by a small, pale-faced man, who was clad in a cheap brown suit and who shuffled as he walked.

When sundry viands had been disposed of and a box of cigars opened, a long conversation ensued. It was conducted mostly in whispers, for the walls of apartment houses are sometimes thin. Swain drew several diagrams on bits of paper, which he exhibited to his companion and then destroyed. He also displayed a roll of bills, detaching a couple of them and pushing them across the table,

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Just before dawn, Cully the Crook departed, wearing a storm-coat, which fell almost to his heels. He was absent a little less than forty-eight hours.

"I've got the chiny jug," said the burglar, when the artist had admitted him. "The job was a dead snap. Could ha' picked any lock in the house with a pitchfork. Plenty of good loot lyin' loose in all directions, but I remembered what you said and didn't lift so much as a burnt match, savin' the vase."

Swain removed the wrappings of the parcel which Cully drew from the depths of his voluminous ulster and found the amphora. After a single glance, he replaced the paper about it. He did not propose to retain the vase longer than was necessary.

Then the artist, much to Cully the Crook's disgust, declared his intention of playing a personal part in the second half of the scheme for replacement. Swain had several reasons. The burglar, once inside the Vernal house, might not realize the importance of setting the vase in a particular place. Also, the empty pedestal stood in Veronica's boudoir; and there were sentimental objections to the profanation of that room by the presence in it of such a character as the ex-convict.

"Well, let's pull it off now," said Cully, after a vain attempt to combat his employer's determination. "It's three hours to daylight and rainin' like a washwoman emptyin' tubs. If the house is empty, as you say, there won't be a bit of trouble. Only, you must do what I tell you."

Swain, obeying the burglar's whispered instructions, rode in cabs and ran through alleys, he walked boldly past policemen and dodged into dark doorways, he crouched under doorsteps and climbed back fences. The darkness, the turnings, the rain beating in his face, the necessity of preserving the amphora intact bewildered him; and when, at last, he found himself in a musty cellar he could not, for his life, have told how he came there or whose it was.

Cully the Crook was perfectly self-possessed. He opened the slide of a dark lantern, threw a pencil of light on the stairs and boldly ascended, Swain following. Lock after lock yielded to the burglar's swift dexterity. In the hall the artist recognized several objects and knew he was in the Vernal house. Outside

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Veronica's boudoir he told his agent to wait. He entered himself and placed the amphora on the pedestal in the corner. Then the two retired as they had come, carefully locking the doors.

"Now, Cully," said the artist, when they had regained his quarters, "here is the last instalment of the five hundred I promised you. Have you ever felt a desire to go West?"

"You bet," returned the burglar. "The East is a bit too small for me."

"Well, in this envelope there is a ticket to San Francisco. It is yours on one condition — that you write a letter at my dictation."

"'Tain't safe, gov'nor. I'm an older hand than you and I tell you it's risky to put things on paper."

"Are the police acquainted with your handwriting?"

"No, I can't say as they are, seein' as I never wrote but two letters in my life and them to my sister in Jersey."

"Then there is absolutely no danger. I promise not to mail the letter until after you arrive in San Francisco."

Cully, with the air of one violating a sacred tradition, finally consented to do the rash thing his employer wished. Swain produced some cheap paper, purchased at a small shop, and, with considerable effort, the burglar managed to set down the sentences suggested by the artist. Swain was careful not to dictate.

"W'at name?" asked the writer, when the body of the letter was finished.

"Invent one. Bill Jones will do as well as another."

"How does Jim Tom Parsons strike you?"

"First-rate — put it down."

Cully, with a cunning leer, appended the name. The artist fancied that Jim Tom Parsons had, in some way, incurred the ex-convict's displeasure.

"That is all," said Swain, when the letter, in a directed envelope, had been locked away in a drawer.

"I don't tumble to your lay, gov'nor," remarked Cully, rising, "but that's your business. You wanted the chiny jug moved. I wanted the five hundred greens. I gave you a square deal. Shake!"

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He extended his hand. The artist, with some concealed reluctance, took it.

Pelham Swain gave himself up to fancies — humorous and otherwise. Veronica would certainly stare when, on her return, she found the amphora in its accustomed place. But — could he anticipate her procedure? She might send the vase to him, unaccompanied by any explanation. That, however, would leave her curious and bewildered, therefore she would not do this. More probably, she would apply to him for enlightenment. That would give him an opportunity to bring the episode to a satisfactory ending.

When Veronica Vernal, a month later, came home, her surprise was as unbounded as Swain could have wished. She lifted the amphora, identified it, then sat down and gazed at it in stupefaction. Was that bit of porcelain enchanted? She could think of no other way to account for its mysterious migrations. Had she done her lover a great injustice? Over and over again she reviewed all the circumstances and could make nothing of them, save that the vase was there on its pedestal, precisely where it should be. There was something beyond this obvious fact — what? Only a maze of puzzling, and therefore irritating, conjectures. She seized her hat and coat; fresh air was a necessity. Her footsteps tended — as Swain probably anticipated they would — directly to the home of Alicia Carlin. It had occurred to Veronica that there might be two precisely similar vases in existence.

The moment Miss Vernal noted that the amphora had been removed from the Carlin mantel she regained full possession of all her faculties. Therefore, when her hostess appeared, Veronica promptly began to recount the interesting incidents connected with her tour of Mexico; not doubting that Alicia, when her turn came, would refer to the disappearance of the vase. Nor was she disappointed. Miss Carlin, almost as soon as a chance offered, spoke of the robbery which had occurred during her friend's absence from town and of the fact that nothing had been taken except a unique and valuable bit of porcelain. Veronica, on the occasion of her last call, had possibly noticed it?

Miss Vernal considered — but could not quite recall it.

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"I prized it particularly," Alicia continued, "because, as I supposed, Henry — Mr. Tort — gave it to me. Of course, you have heard —"

"Everything is news to me," replied Veronica, feeling that her head was on the point of beginning to whirl again.

"We have had an understanding for nearly a year, but, after that dreadful accident, Henry would not hear to making the engagement public until he had recovered. He has just returned from his voyage perfectly restored; and we are telling our friends. Indeed, we are to be married almost immediately."

"It's the strangest thing, though, about that vase." Alicia went on to say, when the flutter aroused by her announcement had somewhat subsided. "The morning Henry sailed he hinted that I might expect to receive a little present after he had gone. That evening a box, containing a beautiful piece of pottery, came to the house. I took for granted he had sent it; and in my first letter I thanked him for the gift, without expressly mentioning its character. Now, Henry says he never saw or heard of the vase; that he intended to send me a brooch. In his hurry to make the vessel by sailing time he gave the order to an inexperienced clerk, who stupidly forgot or mislaid my address; so the people at the store, not knowing what else to do, concluded to hold the brooch until inquiries should be made."

"But the address on the box?" asked Veronica, with all the indifference she could assume.

"It bore none, and was certainly sent here by mistake. But isn't it strange that the burglar should have taken the vase and left the silver?"

"Why, that reminds me," cried Veronica, apparently recalling an incident which, at the time of its occurrence, had made but a slight impression on her mind. "I have a story about a vase, too; one quite as strange as yours. Some weeks before I went away I loaned a Dionysian amphora, a very fine specimen of a new thing in pottery, to a friend. I remember now that up to the time of my departure it had not been returned, yet, when I entered my rooms this morning, it was standing where I always kept it, on a pedestal in the corner of my boudoir. What do you think of that? — and the house closed during our absence."

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"Are you certain it was not sent back before you went away?" Alicia asked.

"Ah! You want to spoil my story by making it only a piece of forgetfulness. One's memory does play strange tricks with one sometimes. Yet, I am almost sure that —"

Miss Carlin declined to admit that Miss Vernal's story was in the class with her own. The circumstance was so easily explicable.

Veronica returned home deeply dissatisfied with herself. She could not put away the thought that she had acted hastily in breaking her engagement. Alicia Carlin's account of how the vase came to her almost completely exonerated Pelham Swain; and he could probably explain everything. Should she offer him the opportunity? Pride and apprehension said "No." The man, stung by a sense of the wrong done him, might spurn her advances. Curiosity and reviving love said "Yes." If Swain's protestations had been sincere he would overlook the hurt she had given him. The mental struggle of a woman to anticipate what a man will do is akin to physical agony. Then, if the outcome proves her wrong, she pretends never to have given the subject even a momentary consideration. If her conclusion is verified by the man's subsequent conduct she smilingly refers to "a woman's intuition." This is part of the play.

Miss Vernal, that night, lay staring at the ceiling of her room until the darkness softened to gray shadows and she became aware that another day had dawned. The light seemed to bring her clearness of inward, as well as outward, vision. Very quietly, but with a precision of movement which indicated that doubt had fled, she arose, dressed, wrote a line or two to Pelham Swain, went softly down-stairs, slipped out of the front door to the street and dropped the note in a neighboring mail box. Then, returning to her room, she threw herself on a couch, drew a soft slumber robe about her and slept serenely until her maid informed her of a waiting breakfast.

When Swain, that afternoon, received a written invitation to call at Miss Vernal's home — to explain something which greatly puzzled her and upon which only he could throw light — a triumphant smile lighted his face. Yet he did not display the alac-

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rity which might have been expected. Much reflection had brought him to a knowledge of the virtue which lies in slow movement. The artist, after a careful examination of Veronica's note, finished the novel he was reading, dressed, dined at his club and took a long walk, which led him to the lower and, finally, disreputable part of the city. Here he posted a letter. Then, seeming to have no further business in that quarter, he returned to his rooms; where, with impatient resolution, he waited for the machinery of the postal system to revolve. He had calculated everything — even the value of the postmark of a down-town station on the envelope which contained Cully the Crook's laboriously written epistle.

Swain did not make the mistake of regarding Veronica's note merely as a summons to appear as a witness. On the other hand, there was nothing in its tone to suggest that he might safely don the ermine of a judge and decide the case as he pleased. He resolved, therefore, to take and maintain the attitude of awaiting developments. He would know nothing beyond the fact of his peremptory dismissal, save as Veronica might enlighten him.

Miss Vernal received her caller with that formal cordiality which may mean much or nothing. Her face was flushed and her hand, as Swain noticed, very cold — but these might be indications merely of excitement. The artist seated himself and remarked that his hostess had been away.

"Yes," said Veronica, "we are just home, but in the short time since my return I have learned of some remarkable circumstances. Please read this — aloud. It seems almost incredible; yet I believe the writer has told nothing but the truth."

She handed Swain the burglar's letter. The young man drew the blotted page from the envelope and, in the slow, puzzled manner of one who deciphers doubtful chirography, read:

MISS VERRONICKY VURNUL
542 E streat citty

DEER MISS

One nite I cracked a crib in B streat. While I was lookin at a purty two handed ehiny jug in the parler I hears sumbudy comin down stairs. I scooted carryin the jug with me. Not wantin to luze the nite I went over to E streat and cracked your house. Thinks I He begin at the top this time. This was seein as your house was empty. So I goes up stairs to your room. I node it was your room because havin litterrary likes I picked up a

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book havin your name writ in the frunt of it. After readin a little I turned a glim on the jug. I seen as no fence in town would give a plunk for it. So I set it on a little round stand in the corner. Jest as I was gittin ready to go to work I hears a cop whissel in frunt of the house. I slid down to the bacement in a hurry and skipt out. Before makin my getaway I stopt to look around and it was then I locked the door. I dont reely want the chiny jug only the salvashun army has got me and Im tryin to be a better man. Lots of the things Ive swiped I cant send back to them as owns em but I rite these few lines to ask you kindly if you dont want the jug to send it to the gent as lives at 542 B streat. That was the first crib I cracked that nite. If its too much trubble to send the jug sit it inside the ally gait the nite of the first ful moon and Ile send for it. Hopin you are well and all your relashuns

Your true frend
JIM TOM PARSONS.

"Did you ever hear of anything so extraordinary," Miss Vernal asked, as Swain finished spelling out the epistle.

"A very remarkable production, certainly. But — what is it all about? A little china jug appears —"

"It's the vase you gave me — the Dionysian amphora," Veronica cried.

Swain's countenance was a study in hopeless bewilderment.

"The amphora! I sent it back to you three days after I borrowed it."

"But it never arrived — and I afterward saw it on Alicia Carlin's mantel."

"So that was the reason — ?" The man's voice was very grave; reproachfully so. "It was probably owing to an error on the part of the messenger. Do you not think, Miss Ver — Veronica — you should have told me?"

"I — I — Oh, I thought such horrid things — Pelham," the girl stammered, with averted face and tell-tale catches in her voice. I don't know why I was so foolish. Can you — will you not overlook — ?"

Swain, taking her in his arms, told her, to the length of forty minutes, that he could and would. Out of the inarticulateness of their conversation only a couple of broken sentences emerged.

"Oh, that blessed burglar!" This from Veronica.

"Yes, dearest; we have reason to be grateful to Cul — er — what's his name? — Jim Tom Parsons." This from Swain.

When Miss Alicia Carlin, on the following morning, read Jim

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Tom Parsons' letter and, by slow degrees, grasped the situation. her amazement was profound.

"Just to think, dear," she said to Veronica, "that your story and mine were really halves of the same story. If the thing had not actually happened I would never have believed it possible. I am thoroughly convinced that there are occult powers at work in this world and that they had something to do with the return of your vase."

Veronica agreed that the circumstances were inexplicable on any other hypothesis.

Mr. and Mrs. Pelham Swain and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Tort are on terms of great intimacy and often dine at each other's homes. At these dinners the young wives find, in the travels of the Dionysian amphora and the marvelous interference of that unknown personality, Jim Tom Parsons, unending subjects for conversation and wonder. Swain, long ago, under pledge of eternal secrecy, let Tort into the mystery of the whole affair — and the two men often manage, by gravely citing real and imaginary coincidences of a remarkable kind, to carry conjecture to unheard of lengths. Afterward, up-stairs, they indulge in laughter of a stealthy, unpenetrating quality; and the wives cannot understand why their husbands' waistcoats often show round, white marks, such as might suggest, were it possible to imagine proceedings of that undignified character, that the two men had poked at each other with the chalked ends of billiard cues.

Pelham Swain — in spite of holding himself the most justifiable, least suspected, best rewarded of criminals — has his fears. One of these is that he may sometime talk in his sleep. Another is that Mrs. Henry Tort may ask him why, on a certain occasion, he failed to recognize his own work. He has an explanation ready; but, in all probability, will never be required to give it. Mrs. Tort is one of those comfortable, considerate persons who make wide allowances — especially for the abstraction of a genius, who has a sweetheart, several thousand miles away, to occupy his thoughts.

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Angel.*

BY PAUL J. FAIR.

THEY walked their ponies, for it was hot—hot even for New Mexico. The stage road lay white and heavy with the alkali dust, and in the distance the heat made it writhe and dance serpent-like. The mountains to the south seemed unreal, and wavered indistinctly as the hot dust-laden currents pulsated in the intervening space. Horned toads squatted in the brassy glare, only to scuttle back into the breathless blue shadows that the scattering sage-brush cast. Once a rattlesnake's metallic warning sounded hollowly, and the ponies edged gingerly to one side from where the reptile had coiled itself in the road.

One of the ponies lagged a few steps behind the other. He was a typical cow-pony, thin, ewe-necked, cat-hammed, and of an unnameable color, perhaps more of a buckskin than anything else. The hands had rounded up a herd of wild mustangs in the foothills, and after each of the men had taken his pick, Angel had chosen this beast, and the rest were shot, for they would have been troublesome with the saddle herd.

"Diablo" he had been named; "for," as Angel explained, "he shore has wicked intentions; an' besides I need somethin' like thet to sorta even things, seein' ez how yu gents hev afflicted me with a title-page that's some awk'ard to do the right thing by." So the word went around through the camps that the Cross-Y outfit had both an angel and a devil in its makeup, and the angel could weather the worst storms that the devil could concoct.

Except for his grin, Angel's outward appearance did not warrant his christening. It was a broad, leathery grin that creased his face with folds and wrinkles innumerable, and loudly bespoke a good nature. A pair of slits in the upper border of the leather

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served as eyes. They looked forward into the horizon, with the level gaze of the plains. Sandy hair, bleached to a dusty straw-color around the neck, was covered by a floppy sombrero. A thong run through a series of holes in the brim restrained its flappings somewhat. Around his throat, a gorgeous handkerchief of scarlet silk hung limply knotted, while a patched flannel shirt, and a pair of chaps, covered with black angora fur, worn and moth-eaten in spots, hung together over a body that was much too small for them. A greasy belt, in which a few cartridges were stuck here and there, slanted around his waist, sagging at the right hip with the weight of a pistol. His bow-legs curved to his pony's sides, and the high heels of his boots were all that prevented his inward-pointing feet from being thrust entirely through the stirrups.

Angel had drifted into the camp one fall during the rodeo, and asked the foreman for work. That official, pointing out a horse, told him to cut out a steer from the herd in the corral, and see how long it would take him to tie it. The men winked at one another, and stood aside with imperturbable faces, while Angel roped the horse, saddled it, and swung quickly on its back.

For a moment the horse stood hump-backed and quivering, then, with a squeal, he reared, and jumped stiff-legged in the air. Down he came with a twisting, bone-racking jolt. His legs were as rods of stiff whalebone, that sprung and stiffened, as he jumped and struck the ground, with seemingly no time for recovery.

Blank surprise came over Angel's face. Then the smile spread out its wrinkles again. He understood. When the horse was tired he jumped off, and after unsaddling, looked at the foreman, still grinning broadly.

"Well?" he queried.

The foreman squinted at him quizzically for a moment, then exploded in volcanic mirth.

The outfit echoed him.

"We've shore got 'n angel among us now. The pore deluded son-of-a-gun has got locoed, and fell through while he was frolickin' 'round on the heavenly stock range. Yu're name will be Angel if yu ride with the saints on the Cross-Y."

Thus was he christened, and unasked he had sworn allegiance

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to the foreman. Hadn't the boss given him a good job? That seemed to offset any possible wrongs in Angel's mind. What if he was used as the unscrupulous mind of the foreman dictated? More than a few times could he have shown the marks of superfluous energy, on the part of his employer, when the latter had taken too much whiskey for the good of his never certain temper. Once, indeed, an attempt as peacemaker resulted in a bullet from the foreman's gun nearly ending the puncher's career, and with a broken shoulder, he was laid up for a while to mend.

"No matter," reasoned Angel; "he come awful near spongin' up the bar, an' when he does that he gets some near-sighted and didn't know me. Besides, he set 'em up twict that day."

Now the foreman was to be married, and the Angel was going to town with him to bring back his horse, while the foreman would return with his bride a week later on the stage.

"The boss' girl," they called her intimately, when they heard of the approaching event, although it was only hearsay that they knew her. She lived at Nogales, and he had met her there when the last stock had been shipped. The adobe ranch house had been newly whitewashed, and sundry repairs made around it, filling the simple cowboys with awe and apprehension.

Angel was appealed to for information, and readily he told them all he knew, and more, for, as he confided, he felt "almost as if he was a pardner with the boss."

They fell upon him bodily, and made all manner of sport.

"Yu're too plumb joovenile appearin' to think about goin' double."

"Thirty ain't joovenile!" he retorted hotly.

"Thirty! Yu can't tell how old yu air, sinct the boss seen fit to remove yer front teeth. Lord, angels don't get born anyway — they jus' happen. I'll bet yu can't rec'llect anything that 'ud own up to bein' parent to yu."

He grinned and shook his head, while the bunk-house trembled with their joy. Thus it was always, and intrenched with good nature and an impregnable smile Angel held his own.

They were riding slowly, for it was hot, and said little. The foreman was uncomfortable in his store clothes, and occasionally swore at the landscape in general and Angel in particular. It was

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his only method of keeping cool, and Angel didn't object. But the foreman didn't think of that, and it would have made no difference if he had. Angel deserved to be cursed for being comfortable, and Angel's good humor angered him the more.

At last they arrived in town and stopped, and the foreman, untying the bundle of clothes from the back of his saddle, handed the lead rope to Angel.

"Yu finish inveiglin' that rancho into a respectable look before I get back, or the kiyotes 'll be havin' a *fiesta* with your carcass, *Sabe?* Now *vamos.*" He turned away toward the door of a low wooden building, whose glaring sign proclaimed it to be "The Stockman's Oasis."

"Hey!" called Angel, and he turned impatiently, "look out fer thet Yaqui buck, Red Juan, when yu come back. I heerd they chased him up this way out'n Sonora."

"Yu chicken-livered burro! Do yu reckon any scared-out Injun cavortin' round th' landscape is goin' to make me travel in boiler-plate?" yelled the foreman, as a whiff from the open door of the saloon struck him, and he disappeared.

"The boss mighta given me a drink, too, seein' he's goin' to be married," Angel told himself aloud. Then he started back hurriedly, for it was late, and the ranch was a long way from town. He would have many things to attend to in the week of the foreman's absence, and they would keep him busy.

Then, when the week had gone, and the next day would bring the foreman, grave fears dawned in Angel's mind. A passing cowpuncher told him that a couple of Mexicans had seen Red Juan two days before, in a cañon only thirty miles to the south. What if the outlaw should try to hold up the stage — tomorrow? The foreman would come on that stage — and bring his girl. Fear dazed him for an instant, fear that his boss would come to harm.

Slowly, for Angel's mind never operated otherwise, a plan unfolded itself. He would go down to where the road skirted a lone mesa, where, if at any place, the Indian would be likely to attempt holding up the stage. He would go there early in the morning, long before daylight, and hide himself among the rimrock and watch. If Red Juan came he could pick him off easily

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from above. That seemed simple enough. No, he would say nothing about it, then he would get the reward himself. The more he thought about it, the more pleased he became with the scheme. If he did that, perhaps the men wouldn't make fun of him so much, and then, too, he would be helping the foreman out of a mess just when he ought not to be in one. That was the principal thing, anyway.

So he borrowed the cook's Winchester rifle, and made it known that he was going after an antelope, for the proper reception of the boss' girl. They told him he had better be careful or the boss would be jealous. Jealous of Angel — their mirth grew huge at the idea.

He started early, far earlier than was necessary for antelope, and they cursed him for waking them, when he fell over a chair. But it was Angel's way, they muttered, and turned over and fell asleep again.

Riding Diablo down to the mesa, he tied him in a deep arroyo at one side, then started to climb to the top. It was hard work, for he was unused to climbing on foot, and the slope was steep, and not only washed into many gullies, but had patches of cactus growing upon it. Once he loosened a rock slide, and tumbled and slid for a hundred feet, scraping and clawing vainly for a hold. He was tired when at last he found a hiding place at the edge, under a sage bush and between two great rocks. Here he could see everything below him, on the road, and on the rough side of the mesa between.

Lame and bruised from the fall he had received in the slide, he stretched full length on a rock, and closed his eyes to rest. It was still early, an hour before it would be light enough to see. He dozed for a few minutes, then caught himself, almost frightened, then dozed off again and again. It grew light, and he arranged his position so that he could watch and not be cramped. He threw down the lever of his rifle a little, and looked in to see that there was a cartridge in the chamber, then set the hammer at half-cock.

A noise of a rock, dislodged, and falling, bounding, and clattering down, made him look, and from a projecting shoulder stole an Indian. Instantly Angel knew who it was. His muscles

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tightened, almost with a jerk, and he cocked his rifle softly, pressing back the trigger to keep it from clicking audibly. He would shoot when the Indian passed just below. No, it would be better to wait until he stopped — then he would be sure. Rapidly the outlaw climbed down the slope, twice stopping to look down the road that strung out into the distance beneath, where, away off toward the town, a little crawling dust-cloud marked the stage's progress. He crouched down on a big rock, about two hundred feet above the road, and almost directly below where the cow-puncher was watching.

Softly Angel brought the rifle to his shoulder, resting the barrel on the edge of the rock. A feeling of savage joy seized him, an alien spirit, and his eyes glinted dully, as he glanced down the sights. This would save the boss from an ugly affair, and it was worth anything to do that. Then he pressed the trigger.

The finger-lever snapped down and back, but it was unnecessary. A white and dusky mass sprawled into a crevice behind the rock and out of sight. He turned away. Now that the work was done, he was sick of it. He would wait here until the stage had passed, before going back to the ranch, for this was nothing for a woman to know about, especially the foreman's girl.

Slowly the dust-cloud grew nearer and larger. Then he made out two men on the box, one the driver, of course, and the other, as they were almost abreast of him, he recognized as the foreman, and it pleased him. But he had a rifle, and they kept looking at the slopes before them. They too, then, must have heard of Red Juan.

"That was jus' like the boss to come, anyhow. He has nerve shore," thought Angel admiringly. But there was no need of worrying over Red Juan, for Juan was lying down there on the slope. He couldn't do any harm now. Angel smiled at the thought, and drew himself up a little to get a better view, for he wanted a glimpse of the bride through the stage window. The movement caught the eyes of the men on the box, and, like light, the rifle came up and cracked.

The foreman saw a body rise and fall outward over the edge, and hang there, a red cloth tied around the head. Again and again he fired, for he wanted to make sure. The bride screamed,

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and the horses leaped wildly. Then the foreman and the driver jumped down, and worked their way in slow zig-zags up the side of the mesa.

The foreman reached the second body first, and raised the head.

"Hell!" The word came like a pistol shot, as he recognized the face, and a momentary wave of pity swept over him. Then pity changed to disgust — annoyed disgust. "He never did have a bit of sense. Look how he tied that rag 'round his head — jus' like an Injun! Dam' little fool! But *he* never woulda learned."

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The Keeper of the 13th Door.*

BY J. S. WOODHOUSE.

THIS is a story of life beyond the crisis. Most narratives end when the enemy is foiled, the lovers joined in happy unison. This is a tale of the juggling by fate after love is dead and only pride, jealousy and revenge survive as predominating passions.

Not that those of whom I speak never had a romance. Indeed theirs was one of the romantic time. It happened during the Civil War. It was the old story of two youths loving a maiden, young, beautiful, and virtuous. The one — sincere, self-denying, patriotic — had gone to war and thus consumed that time of life which ordinarily fits man for his future career. The other — crafty, mercenary, and selfish — had remained at home, preferring the siege of a heart to the siege of a fortress, and by diligence and thrift secured such a financial start as to make him a formidable rival. But when news of the victory swept from the southern battlefields and troops came marching home, the maiden looked with favor on the brawny youth beneath the coat of faded blue. She preferred to trust her heart's happiness to the man of courage rather than to the man of wealth. That is the story of old. Years passed, age crept over the sweetheart of sixty-one and she died, as she had lived, happy in her choice. But time did not soften, death did not break the anguish, jealousy and feeling of revenge that rankled the heart of the disappointed lover. A bereaved mate, with Christian fortitude, awaited, like the soldier that he was, the command of his superior to join the ranks of those gone before.

Old William Brown, propping his bent form on a crooked cane, shuffled feebly along the winding path that led up from the street to the doors of the great state capitol. The white locks that hung

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almost to his shoulders glistened the more brightly in the sunlight because of the palsy-shaking head. He paused now and then, straightened his aged body and drew into his cramped lungs a deep breath of the fresh air. A little invigorated he laboriously continued his slow journey. At those pauses it was an inspiration to a passerby to look into that aged face, where love, hope, and faith had left all their marks of beauty. The old man still wore a loosely fitting suit of blue and now and then proudly felt, to be sure it still was there, a little bronze button in the coat lapel. He bent all the weight of his frail body against the heavy doors before they yielded entrance. Nor did he stop for rest until he had passed through the marble-lined rotunda and reached the grand staircase. Here in a niche of the wall behind a heavy glass was clustered a bunch of American flags. Some retained a little brilliancy, but most were faded, bullet-riddled and end-frayed. Some were so nearly shattered as to be held together only by a thin gauze sewed over them. On each was a small black placard with white figures. The old man's gaze centred on one, especially torn and shattered. He contemplated it seriously. Then with a sigh and shake of his head as he pointed to one said aloud to himself, "That was my flag."

"Aye, and mine too, comrade."

The voice startled him. Another in blue, a trifle younger, stood by his side. For a full minute the old soldiers gazed into each other's faces. William Brown, rubbing the back of his shrunken hand over his eyes as if to clear away a mist, finally stammered: "John Price, what you a doin' here?"

"Been elected sergeant-at-arms o' the senate," was the smiling reply "What you doin'?"

"Senator Berkley got me in as keeper of the 13th door."

As they grasped hands another figure paused in the rotunda, carefully bridged a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles on a Roman nose and scrutinized with interest the two old men. He was dressed in simple but elegant clothes. His thinly drawn hand fumbled nervously his gold-headed cane, his withered lips twitched and then set firmly as he recognized the feebler soldier. This was the disappointed lover — Senator Rawson, as he had come to be, and he pounded his cane vehemently on the marble steps as

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he made his way up the grand staircase to the legislative chamber above. The giving of doorkeeper positions to old soldiers as a sort of pension for meritorious service had long been a practice inviolate with the legislature.

The first five days of the session were consumed in the ordinary organization. Each day William Brown had climbed the long back stairs to the gallery door known as No. 13. The novelty of the first few days had passed and now, resigned to beautiful dreams of youthful days, he sat dozing with his hand upon the great brass knob, for but on the rarest occasions did visitors ever venture to this gallery.

From the floor below the speeches, the motions and the resolutions all reached his ear merely as a noisy rabble. So he caught not the importance of the action when on the sixth day Senator Rawson, chairman of the committee on retrenchment and reform, reported that the committee favored the abolishment of all but twelve doorkeepers. In all there were sixteen. The motion to adopt this report brought Senator Berkley to his feet. He asked to know why not abolish all but thirteen, to which the chairman responded that they had considered how little the doors above number twelve were used. This furnished a theme for objections by Senator Berkley who called attention to the fact that all doorkeepers were necessarily a luxury and could be entirely abolished, but that traditionally the positions had been reserved for compliments to old soldiers.

"I know not of the record of the other soldiers, but of one I can speak with certainty," he spoke in a loud distinct voice. "The Keeper of the 13th door is there by my request. He was one of the men who followed the flag at Fort Donnelson, where the fighting of the Civil War was turned to the South and kept from these northern states. He fought bravely and the regiment history tells how he braved the fire of the enemy's line to rescue and carry from the front to a place of safety a comrade wounded in the first onslaught. And that comrade is here to bear testimony. He is our worthy sergeant-at-arms. The keeper of the 13th door was one of the first to enlist and did not lay down his musket until the war was over. He was brave in battle, alert on the picket line and watchful of every post assigned him."

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The gaunt black figure of Senator Rawson rose from the seat and gained recognition of the president.

"I insist, Mr. President," he spoke with intense sarcasm, "that the sergeant-at-arms remind the keeper of the 13th door, who is sleeping in his chair, that he is not maintaining the reputation for alertness that the senator from Poweshiek would establish."

The remark was taken humorously and the president directed the sergeant-at-arms to awaken the keeper of the 13th door. The senate officer's cheeks burned a deep red as he disappeared. Having gained the floor Senator Rawson took occasion to further defend the report of the committee and deplored the fact that as representatives of the people they were squandering large sums in maintaining unnecessary employees. He grew enthusiastic and had raised high his trembling hand to give emphasis to a final fling when he was interrupted by the thunderous voice of the sergeant-at-arms, who had reappeared at the back of the senate chamber and called:

"Mr. President."

"Mr. Sergeant-at-arms," recognized the chairman.

The old soldier straightened his figure to attention, a tear trickled down his wrinkled cheek and his voice trembled:

"I have to report, Mr. President, that your sergeant-at-arms is unable to perform the commission of this body."

Every senator gasped one breath and maintained the silence of astonishment for this seeming revolt. Blood rushed to the face of the old Senator Rawson, who still remained standing and whose figure now shook with rage. Then the President spoke.

"For what reason is the sergeant-at-arms unable to perform this commission?"

All members leaned inquiringly forward in their seats, while some of the older ones formed trumpets behind their ears with the palms of their hands. Every eye in the chamber was focused on the soldier who, his body shaking with emotion, paused as if trying to find words for appropriate answer. Suddenly, as if despairing of such power, he straightened his arms by his side, stood the attention of a soldier, seemed to swallow hard and then with a broken voice cried:

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"The keeper of the 13th door is dead."

So old William Brown, who would otherwise have been lowly and poorly interred, was given a state burial from the senate chamber, his war record was eulogized and the 13th door was draped with heavy crepe throughout the remainder of the session, reminding daily the disappointed lover that he who studieth revenge keepeth his own wounds open.

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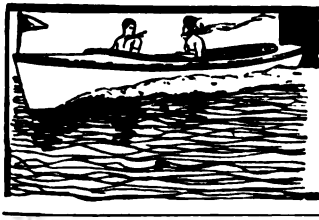

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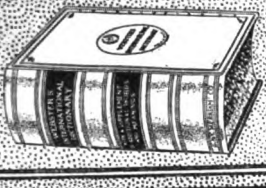

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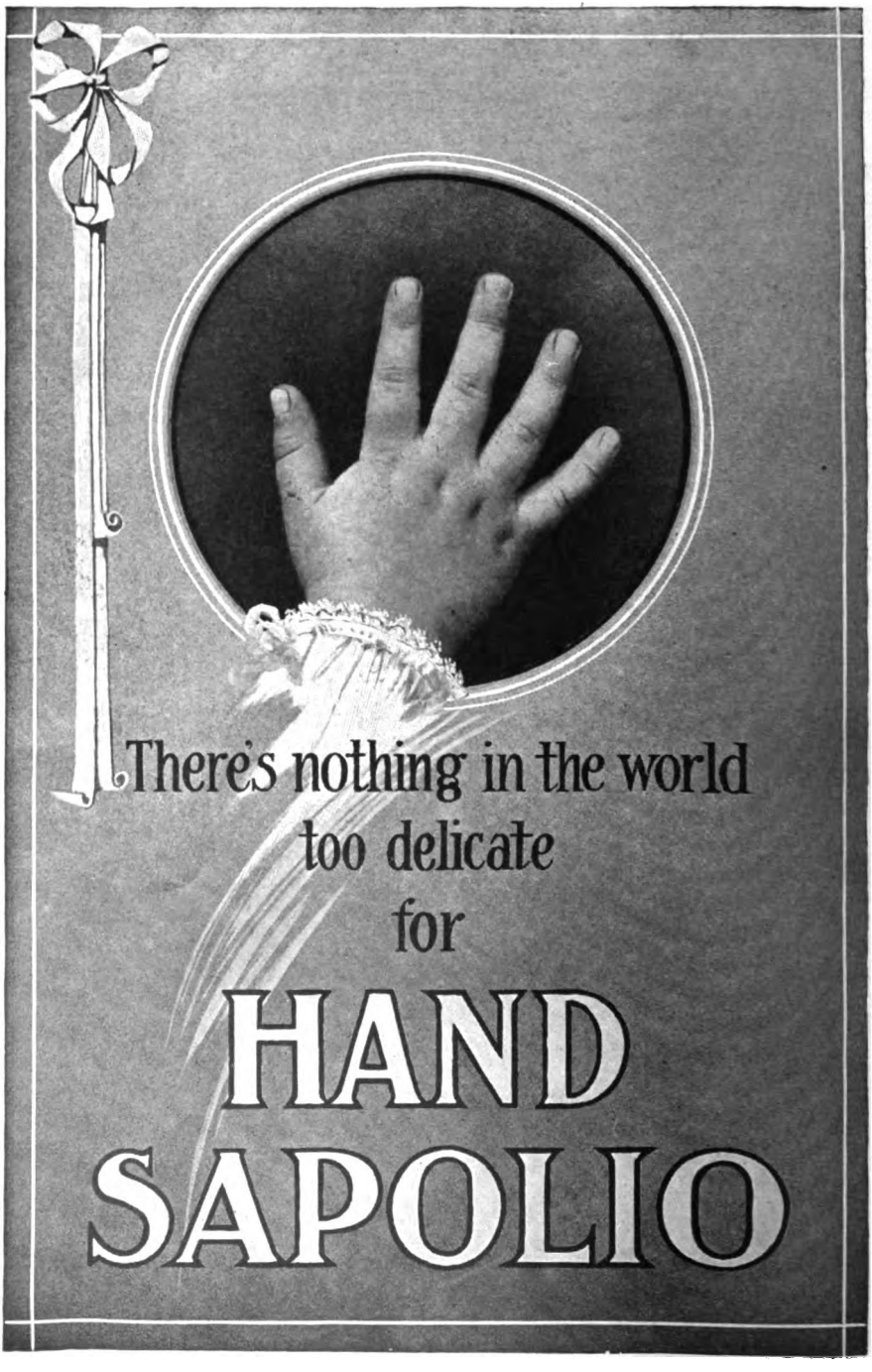

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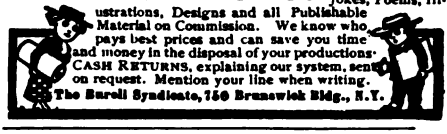

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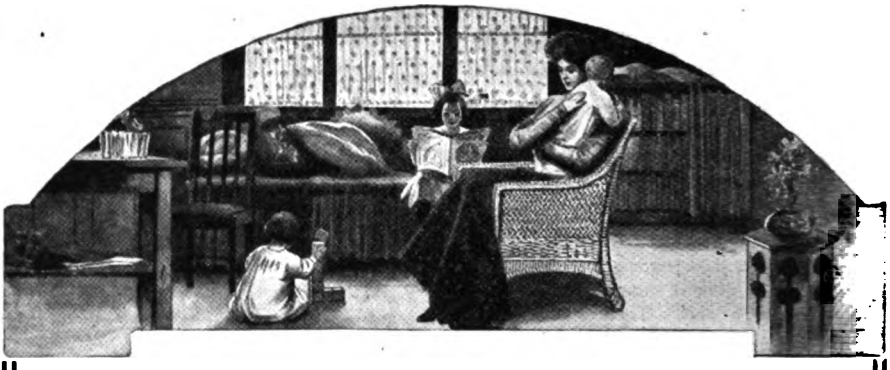

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The Treasure of the Desert.*

BY DONALD KENNICOTT.

RAIN was falling over the Painted Desert — the first rain worthy of the name in two years. A few days, and little yellow primroses would be sprouting from the crannies of the rocks; the Navajos at Cañon de Chelly would be drilling holes deep in the sand to plant their corn; the Mormon sheep-ranchers along the northern border would even drift their herds a little way into the desert itself. Yet rain may also be of paramount interest to persons whose occupation is distinctly not agricultural. Hump Jetthro, for instance, the ragged little cripple who swept out the Gold-Bug Saloon at Tuba City, had become animated by a strange excitement.

All day Jetthro had endeavored by an elaborate assumption of listlessness to disguise his inward perturbation. All night, after other people were in bed, he had bustled about in a fever of excited preparation. And an hour before dawn, in a cold, diminishing drizzle, he mounted his little pinto pony and silently took his departure from Tuba City. His equipment had its significance: a big canteen and a pair of field-glasses hung from his saddlehorn; rolled up in a gunny-sack behind him, was a week's provision; in a holster under his left arm hung a good long gun; and tucked away securely in his breast pocket, was the diagonally

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torn half of a sheet of paper, scrawled over curiously with figures and measurements.

When well out of town, Jetthro unbuttoned his oilskin slicker and his coat, then reaching down the back of his neck, drew out from under his shirt, a roll of rags. He straightened up in the saddle, stretched his arms from the shoulder, and with difficulty repressed a mad shout of exultation. When one has been a hunchback for three years, it is an almost overwhelming relief to become thus suddenly cured; by way of celebration, Jetthro took a little nip from the flask in his pocket. He then settled back snugly into his oilskin, peered warily out into the darkness from under his dripping sombrero, and chuckled with a certain savage hilarity.

Jetthro had other reasons for joy also. First and foremost, it had rained in the Painted Desert, and rain there meant much to him. It meant for one thing, that the tracks of his horse were even now being obliterated behind him. That was important, but what was still more vital to his enterprise, it meant that far out in the middle of the desert, in a certain hollow of the rocks known to him, there would have collected a pool of water — perhaps more, perhaps less, but in any event enough to sustain him and his horse while he transacted important business in that neighborhood. Jetthro chuckled again as he thought of what that business was; and as the first streak of gray glimmered in the east, though the drizzle had hardly stopped, he pulled off his hat, and with his head thrown well back snuffed the rare scent of wet earth luxuriously. "Little drops of water," he piped in a thin, cracked voice — "Little grains of sand — Makes the mighty ocean — *And* the pleasant land."

Song and hilarity had been somewhat rare with Hump Jetthro for the past three years, although during all that time, he had been a rich man — had owned a half share in a store of minted gold and printed bank-notes that should have opened to him all the steaming flesh-pots of San Francisco. And yet — so curious and unkindly are the caprices of Fate — all this time he had been compelled meanly to scratch and scrape to keep himself alive, while he waited for rain in the Painted Desert.

For it was three years since that, assisted by a great hulking oaf of a Swede named Pete Thulin, Jetthro had successfully

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" stuck up " the express agent at Henryville and had fled into the desert with forty thousand dollars in currency stuffed into a pair of shaggy goat-skin saddle-bags. The two had been close-pressed by a hard riding posse, and fearing capture with the damning money upon them, had " cached " it under a boulder half way across the desert. They had recorded the exact location of this boulder by an elaborate series of measurements from an easily recognizable " comb " of lava rock, had noted down the figures on a sheet of paper, and then in order that neither might come back to retrieve his fortune without the other, they had torn this " key " diagonally in half and each taken a portion. Then the better to elude their pursuers, they had parted company and ridden hard in opposite directions.

Each had made his escape safely enough, but on rejoining each other at an appointed rendezvous a month later, trouble had developed. Jetthro had wanted to go back for the loot immediately, but the canny Swede had insisted that they wait at least a year. They had parted after a bitter wrangle; and Jetthro, moved partly by resentment and partly by avarice, after removing himself to a safe distance and assuming a thoroughly deceptive disguise, had by means of a cleverly managed anonymous letter, denounced Thulin to the authorities. The Swede had been forthwith captured, tried and convicted; he now reposed safely within stone walls; and yet never, so far as Jetthro could learn from newspaper accounts of the trial, had he " blown on " his partner. He was a strange man — that Thulin.

Jetthro had no notion of what the Swede had done with his half of the " key " either, yet as he rode out of Tuba City that morning, he had very little doubt of his ability to find the treasure. The figures in his possession would locate it within a mile or two, and with water to sustain him, he could simply work over the ground until he found the *cache*. It was under a big white boulder, he remembered, about three miles from the water-hole. It was true that there were a thousand other big white boulders just like it on the slope where it lay — he remembered that in the distance, they had looked like a great flock of sheep scattered out to feed — but with time at his disposal, he could turn them over one by one if necessary.

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Noon found the rejuvenated cripple under a cleared sky and glaring sun, well out into the solitude of the Painted Desert. At nightfall he had gained the lava rock district. At noon of the second day he led his horse down a little rocky valley and found the water-hole, as he had anticipated, well filled. Gallons and gallons of it there were, cool, clear rain-water. He drank heavily, unbridled his horse, and as the beast dropped its muzzle to the pool, he sighed with satisfaction and commenced filling his pipe. The next instant he jumped back as if from a rattlesnake, and mechanically snatched at the weapon hidden under his left arm. There in the mud at the edge of the pool was the freshly made imprint of a man's foot.

After a breathless moment, Jetthro crept closer and knelt over the foot-print — a Crusoe who had discovered a fellow being on this island of the desert. It was the track of a large, heavy man, whose shoes were nearly worn out; the heel was much indented as if he carried his weight well back. Jetthro knew a man whose track was like this; that man was safe inside prison walls, and yet — Jetthro fingered his pistol nervously and peered about him with the quick, furtive eyes of a rat.

Presently he crept to the top of the nearest ridge. Through his field-glasses, he thence commanded a wide stretch of country — a primordial landscape of bare, volcanic rock, broken into countless crags and cliffs and chasms. Nowhere was there any living thing to be seen; there came to him not the slightest sound; and yet that new made foot-print in the mud by the water-hole —

Jetthro squared his shoulders, and in a conscious effort to drive away his timidity, laughed aloud. He returned to the pool, picketed his horse, devoured a heartening luncheon. Then after taking another look at the triangular bit of paper the image of which was already indelibly engraved upon his brain, he set off on foot toward the Valley of the White Boulders. He arrived thither without mistake, about mid-afternoon. He had met no one and heard nothing. When he topped the last intervening "comb," however, he started back abruptly, and snatched at his pistol again. At least a third of the boulders on the slope below him had been recently overturned.

Yet there was no one in sight, and after a moment of hesitation,

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in a frenzy of fear lest the treasure had already been carried off, Jetthro hurried down among the rocks and ran from one boulder to another. He examined each one of those overturned, and then heaved a great sigh of relief. None of them quite answered the description; none of them covered a little hollow where a smaller stone had been removed to afford space for the *cache;* he was yet in time.

Without pausing to rest, he attacked the other boulders, and in a passion of anxiety fell to turning them over. He was a small man and it proved an infinitely laborious task; Thulin had done the lifting when they made the *cache.* It was near the middle of the slope if he remembered rightly; yet he could not be sure, for three years will distort one's recollections a good deal, and the stones, too, were all depressingly similar. He had examined perhaps twenty of them, when darkness overtook him unawares — a murky, starless darkness, the aftermath of the rain.

It would be almost impossible to get back to his horse and blankets now, and Jetthro had no mind to risk breaking his neck or losing himself among the sudden chasms of the rocks. Collapsing from fatigue, he huddled up behind a big boulder and passed the night there, now dosing, now starting up in a panic at some nightmare of attack. With the first gleam of light, he rose and tried to resume his search, but finding himself too weak with hunger and too fevered with thirst to continue, reluctantly set out back toward the pool.

The sun was only just up when he arrived there — and yet Mystery had again been before him. His horse, its skull crushed in as if under the hammer of a Titan, lay where he had tethered it. Its belly had been ripped open and a huge chunk of the loin hacked away. And there were more tracks — the footprints of a large man who carried his weight well back — in the mud at the edge of the fast-diminishing pool.

Jetthro made a further examination — and more discoveries; his canteen and the bulk of his provisions were gone. The man must have left within a very short time, and yet even to an experienced searcher, the bare rocks beyond the pool betrayed neither the direction of his coming nor of his going. Jetthro choked with anger; yet the uncanny silence and secrecy of his assailant cooled

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his wrath with a sharp chill of fear. His enemy might even now be lurking behind some rock, waiting for a chance to shoot him. From the top of the ridge, he again searched the vicinity warily with his field-glasses, but could see nothing — except a tiny black speck in the distant sky that marked the swift approach of a buzzard toward the carcass of his horse.

Hump Jetthro debated a moment with himself, then returned to the water, drank, and made a meal from the remnant of his scattered provision. Then with his pistol drawn in his hand, he turned back again toward the Valley of the Boulders. It was Thulin who had done this, he was sure; there could be no other. The big Swede must have watched for rain also; must have escaped from his prison at Yuma, traveled on the truck of some freight car to Williams or Manzanilla, and then made his way — on foot apparently — to carry off the *cache*. He must have hidden when he saw Jetthro coming and passed him behind some sheltering ridge. The puzzling thing was that Thulin had not murdered him. Perhaps he had no fire-arms. If that were the case — Jetthro's jaw set hard and he trod stealthily, with roving, wary eyes.

Cannily making a detour this time, he approached the Valley of the Boulders from the opposite direction. He stopped to reconnoitre at each elevation, and moved with the slowness of extreme caution, but at last was able to peep over the edge of a rock on the farther side of the valley. And from there, even with the naked eyes, he could see a tiny figure moving about on the opposite slope. The field-glasses made the picture clearer. It was Thulin, sure enough — a ragged, hatless, shock-headed Thulin, bending and heaving and toiling about among the boulders like a laborious Berserker. On the ground beside him, were the stolen canteen and provision sack. In overturning the boulders, he wielded what appeared to be an iron bar.

Jetthro watched him for a moment, then put down the glasses. Next he pulled off his boots, wrapped a dirty handkerchief about his gun to hide its glitter, crept out on hands and knees from his place of concealment, and commenced worming his way in and out among the boulders down the slope. He had stalked antelope in his time; he knew that he must get very close to make a sure

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shot with a pistol. Now he crawled slowly along on his belly, now passed an open space with a quick, silent rush; now halted motionless, intent, bead-eyed, savage.

The heat of the sun on the rocks almost blistered his hands as he crawled; the glare half blinded him; the silence was so perfect that even at that distance, he feared that his hard breathing would betray him. He had gained the bottom of the valley and had just crept under the grateful shadow of a big rock on the opposite slope, when a sudden, almost intolerable stab of pain shot through his foot and brought him to a terror-smitten halt. It was as if a subtile, envenomed needle had been driven into him; a wave of agony followed, flooding up his leg to the knee, and he knew before he looked about, what had caused it — a great, whip-tailed scorpion that he had disturbed and that had driven its sting so deep into his unprotected ankle that it hung there by its own weapon, struggling hideously.

Jetthro wrapped his hand in his hat and crushed the creature, then jerked out its barbed sting. He knew that the wound would not be fatal, but he knew also that the anguish would endure for days and that his foot would swell very badly, so that he couldn't walk. And Thulin had killed his horse —

For a moment or two, Jetthro writhed about on the ground there; then controlling himself, he peeped out from behind the boulder at Thulin. The Swede had dropped the iron bar, and was kneeling over something on the ground — a shaggy, goat-skin saddle-bag.

Jetthro remembered that saddle-bag well, and what it contained. He stared for an instant, his teeth grinding together as he saw the Swede tying the bag over his shoulder. Then in a frenzy of rage and pain and disappointment, he flung up his pistol and fired. Thulin jumped to one side at the shot, snatched up his iron bar, and looked about him desperately, this way and that. Jetthro rested the pistol on the rock and fired again. This time the Swede saw him, but instead, as he had hoped, of charging at him in a mad Berserk rage, Thulin whirled about and made off, running and dodging among the boulders in the direction of the water-hole.

Jetthro emptied his pistol at the retreating figure, at each shot,

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taking aim carefully. Once the Swede dropped, but was up again in a flash. Very soon he had passed altogether out of sight.

Reloading his weapon, Jetthro ran a little way after him. Then, unable to bear the pain of his weight on the poisoned foot, dropped to his knees and proceeded as best he might in that fashion. Near the place where Thulin had found the *cache,* he came upon a little package of bank-notes that had fallen from the saddle-bag. and pocketed them eagerly. Then leaving the canteen and the provisions where they lay, he set out after Thulin again. And soon he came upon that which sent through him a thrill of savage joy — a drop of blood on the rocks.

As he proceeded, the blood-spots gradually increased in frequency and presently became a trail of great, horrible splotches. Yet Jetthro could follow but very slowly, for his leg was now swollen to the knee and he could only drag himself clumsily along by crawling on his belly with his wounded limb resting on the other. He stuck to the pursuit, however, — a wolf wounded, yet hot and merciless on the slot of its quarry.

Straight back to the water-hole, the trail led. When, close on sun-down, after some hours of almost unendurable effort, Jetthro came near the place, seven big turkey-buzzards flapped squawking into the air, six from one place, one from another. Peering over the edge of the last ridge, he could see the carcass of his horse, already picked to the white, staring bones. At the edge of the water-hole lay another body. Jetthro crawled down to it.

Thulin lay on his back in the stiffening mud at the edge of the pool. One of his eyes had already been torn out, and the clothing — a striped prison suit, half hidden by a ragged pair of overalls and jumper — was soaked with blood from a bullet wound in the loins. The goat-skin saddle-bag slung to his shoulder had burst open; five bright gold-pieces had been spilled out.

Yet Jetthro noted none of these things particularly. What he saw was that in the Swede's outstretched hand was clutched his big tin cup; that the rocks round about were still moist with recently evaporating water; that the pool itself was dry — dry! The Swede had bailed out the water and wasted it; lying there in his death struggle, Thulin had beaten him. His horse was dead;

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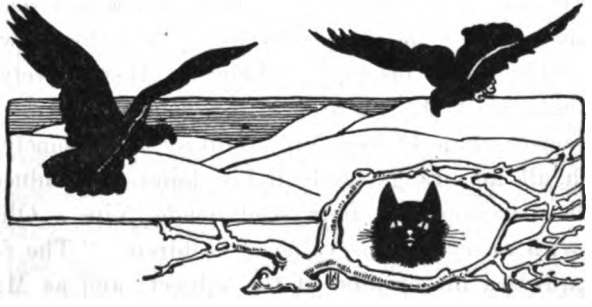
he was sixty miles from other water; he could hardly so much as crawl, unaided.

Jetthro lay still for a time. Presently a black shadow passed over him and he heard a raucous scream as the buzzard that had risen from Thulin's body descended again, impatient and unafraid. Its black, loathsome wing brushed against him as with outstretched claws, it alighted on its prey.



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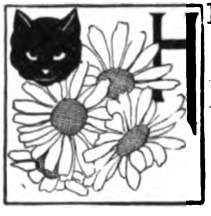
Nip and Tuck.*

BY CLIFFORD HOWARD.



HE had told her he was an orange grower; and he had told her, too, that he had a charming little bungalow amid the foothills of the Sierra Madre, where they would make their nest, he and she. But he had not told her that he was a widower, and that the California nest already contained three boys and a girl.

Oliver Nip had heard somewhere that self-preservation is the first law of nature, and as he knew — from the moment he first set his eyes on her — that he could not live without Maria Tuck, he considered himself justified under the law in withholding these particular facts. It was not that Maria had declared or even intimated that she would not marry a widower with children; but Oliver was taking no chances. Instinctively he felt that if Maria knew the whole story, it would require something more attractive than Oliver Nip's clumsy and homely personality, with all his oranges and all his dollars, to induce her to assume the parentage of four ready-made Nips. Oliver was not born with an eye to the value of children. "The fewer the better," expressed his opinion of the subject; and as Maria was a woman after his own heart — which could not be said with equal frankness of his first venture, — he could not but feel that she shared this opinion with him. At all events, he was engineering his courtship upon this assumption; and while, out of respect to his religion, he was careful to tell her no fibs, he nevertheless showed himself an expert in that form of diplomacy which the lawyers call *suppressio veri* — suppression of the truth; a trick by which one produces the effect desired and saves his conscience at the same time.

He had met Maria at Atlantic City. She had lost her hus-

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band, Tobias Tuck, only the year before. She was still in mourning for him; not because she had loved Tobias particularly, but because it was the custom and because she felt so sorry for herself. And it was Oliver's sympathy for her that had won her heart, in the first place; and it was largely his glowing pictures of California and substantial evidence of a generous bank account, that, in the second place, had won her hand. She had had a hard life with Tobias, she confessed to Oliver, and to exchange it now for a life amid oranges and roses and perpetual spring, was to her a vision of exceeding great joy and an inspiration to a ready acceptance of Oliver's suggestion that they cut short their engagement and enter into matrimonial happiness without further waiting.

Therefore, though their meeting and acquaintance and betrothal were all compassed within the space of three weeks, Oliver's infatuation and Maria's readiness — combined with the seductive influence of murmuring waves and bathing suits and lonely sands — had accomplished as much toward a true understanding as a year and a half of formal love-making.

And so, the wedding took place; quietly and unannounced, in the clergyman's back parlor, with only the clergyman's sister and two or three accommodating hotel guests as witnesses. And Oliver now had his Maria, safe and sure; and as they got into the carriage, to start forth on their honeymoon — a journey that was to take them first for a visit to her home in Virginia and then by gentle stages to his home and the bungalow in California, — he told her he was the happiest man on the face of the earth. But he wasn't; and he knew he wasn't.

The realization that he had deceived her came upon him with sudden and depressing force. He had thought it would be an easy matter to explain the situation to her as soon as she was securely his; but he found now he had overestimated his courage and ability. What if it should cost him her love and respect? What could he do if she should make a scene? Suppose she should leave him! Why, O why, had he not told her at once? Then it would have been easy. Now, the task loomed before him desperate and gigantic. It was inevitable; there was no alternative; he must tell her. But he would promise her anything:

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the children should be sent away, to boarding-school, to the reformatory — anywhere at all; and if that would not suffice he would take them out and lose them in the mountains. It was Maria or nothing.

"Maria," he began, taking her hand and turning away his head; "Maria, dear, are — are you fond of children?"

Maria gave a start and drew away. "I — I don't know for sure what you're drivin' at, Oliver," she stammered; "but — I reckon I might as well tell you right now, instead of keepin' it any longer as a surprise, that I've got seven of 'em — five boys and two girls — and the finest lot of young ones you ever saw; and they're all a-waitin' now to see their new pa."

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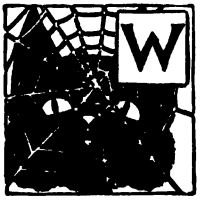
The Man Who Moved a Town.*

BY FRANK X. FINNEGAN.



HEN Sylvester Grubb pulled up his sleepy livery stable nag in front of the Central House in Lynchville, after a tiresome ten-mile drive over country roads, he was hungry, dusty and mad clear through. Nothing had gone well with him from the moment he had set out from Stevensburg to reach the little town which dozed the days away quite comfortably on the river bank, without taking much thought of the great world a few hours' journey from its muddy streets and dingy, old-fashioned buildings.

There was no railroad connection between Lynchville and the rest of civilization, the river and the highways meeting the needs of the town in the way of transportation as they had done since the first cabin was built there sixty years before, but of this fact Sylvester Grubb was fully aware — in fact it was the main reason for his presence in the community. The Stevensburg livery man, however, had contributed to Grubb's unpleasant frame of mind by furnishing him with a broken-down horse which developed strong prejudices against going to Lynchville at all and positively refused to go there at anything approaching the rate of speed which the traveler thought desirable; the ancient side-bar buggy which was the only vehicle available was a springless rattle-trap which nearly shook Mr. Grubb's teeth loose as it bumped over the ruts in the execrable road and he traveled in a cloud of dust which hung about him like a snowstorm while he chirruped and stormed and swore at the plodding horse.

Therefore it was with a sigh of relief that he climbed down from the rig in front of the dejected-looking hotel, feeling that his troubles were over for a time, at least. Lynchville did not

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promise much to a city man on first view, but the very sign-board of the Central House seemed to spell food and rest and sleep, and these necessities were uppermost in Sylvester Grubb's desires when he walked into the hotel office. The proprietor, lolling in a comfortable arm-chair near the key rack, greeted the stranger with a curt and rather lazy nod, but did not take the trouble to rise.

"Howdy," he grunted and returned to the silent contemplation of a horse auction bill which had apparently engrossed his attention when Grubb entered, although it had been hanging on the wall since the year before.

"Good evening," responded the arrival with an attempt at cheerfulness, "I want a nice, quiet room and a big hot supper just as soon as I can get them. Beastly drive over here from Stevensburg, isn't it?"

"I reckon it is," admitted the hotel man, shifting to a more comfortable position in his chair, "but I ain't driven over there in the last eight or ten years. I manage to get along all right here in Lynchville. We don't wish to care about movin' around much."

There was a silence for a few moments while Grubb pawed around among the newspapers and last year's calendars on the desk looking for the hotel register. Then the hotel man, who had been idly watching the search, ventured to make a suggestion.

"Reckon you're lookin' for the register," he said, "but there ain't no sort of use of you registerin'. Fact is, we're full up."

The expectant guest turned on him in amazement, his hopes of a good night's sleep dropping to zero.

"Do you mean to say you haven't got a room?" he demanded.

"That's just what I'm tellin' you, stranger," said the proprietor blandly, "there ain't room to tuck away another soul under this roof to-night. You see, we ain't got so very many rooms first off and then, besides, this is court day and the town is pretty well filled up. Pretty well filled," he repeated, half closing his eyes and twirling his thumbs in blissful contentment.

Sylvester Grubb, accustomed to getting what he wanted when he wanted it, snorted with impatience and restrained with dif-

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ficulty a growing desire to jerk the hotel man out of his complacent attitude and wake him up to a realization of the situation.

"Well, I'll have supper, anyhow," he said, "and see what I can do about a room somewhere else later on."

The hotel man slowly sat up, yawned and stretched his fat arms, after which he contemplated the impatient Mr. Grubb with a beaming smile.

"You're a little bit late for supper," he announced, "supper is off at 7 o'clock. We eat early here in Lynchville — ain't got into them city ways yet, like they've got at Stevensburg."

"Great Scott!" yelled Grubb, "can't I get anything to eat either? What sort of a town is this, anyhow?"

"This is a pretty good town, stranger," said the Boniface in an injured tone, "but, you know, we can't be servin' meals here at all hours of the night. It must be more'n half past seven, ain't it?"

As Grubb turned away from the desk with murder in his heart the door swung open and two villagers slowly sauntered in, looked the distracted stranger over with interest, nodded to him in friendly fashion and leaned an elbow apiece upon the desk.

"Evenin,' Mr. Hopkins," said the taller of the two, looking toward the hotel man and industriously chewing a straw.

"Evenin', Jake," replied Hopkins, genially. "You don't happen to know where this gentleman could get some supper this hour o' the night, do you?"

Jake straightened up and looked at Mr. Grubb as solemnly as though that gentleman had inquired the chances for building a bridge across the river before morning. From his pocket he pulled out a ponderous-looking silver watch and studied it with interest. As the awful hour dawned upon him he looked graver than ever and slowly shook his head.

"I don't know," he said, doubtfully, "it's nearly a quarter to eight. I s'pose everything will be closed up. You don't know, do you Charlie?" he added suddenly to his silent companion, who had been solemnly studying Grubb with as much interest as though he had arrived in an aeroplane.

"I don't want to keep anybody up late," interjected Mr.

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Grubb, with a tinge of sarcasm, "but it does seem to me that in a town of this size a man with money in his pocket ought to be able to get supper and lodging."

The three Lynchville citizens looked at one another sagely and then turned their glances again on the fidgeting stranger.

"Well, it's pretty late, you know," suggested Jake. "I closed up my livery stable before I came over here. Won't be no more goin' on no place to-night."

"Late nothing!" Grubb began stormily, when Charlie, who had been pondering on the problem intensely, suddenly betrayed a gleam of human intelligence.

"Widow Meehan's," he suggested, hopefully.

Proprietor Hopkins struck the office desk with his fist in his delight at the solution of the puzzle.

"That's the idea!" he declared, "the Widow Meehan can take you in. She's got two boarders," he added.

"An' one on 'ems a hand in the flour mill over here that works nights," said Jake, "an' gets his meals at onusual times. Wouldn't be surprised if she could pick you up a supper even this late."

"I hope so," grunted Mr. Grubb, "where does Mrs. Meehan live?"

"That's your buggy outside, ain't it?" asked Jake.

"It's the one I came here in," admitted the hungry traveler, "but you can bet it ain't mine — nor the horse, either."

"I'll drive you over to the widow's," suggested the livery man, "and I s'pose you'll want your rig put up for the night. I'll just take it along after I drop you there."

"If I didn't need it to get out of this confounded town tomorrow," snorted Grubb, "you could take it along and lose it for all I cared. Come on," and he started for the door.

Mine Host Hopkins was visibly perturbed by Mr. Grubb's animadversions on the thriving town of Lynchville and he felt that it devolved upon him to uphold its reputation.

"You shouldn't blame the town because you got in late," he suggested mildly, "this is a pretty good town, stranger, when it ain't so crowded."

"That's what it is," said silent Charlie, suddenly.

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Irate Mr. Grubb stopped with his hand on the door latch and turned to face the indignant pair.

"Say, let me tell you something," he said, slowly and impressively, "I don't know whether you fellows want to risk any money or not, but I'll bet you $100 that one year from now this town won't be here!"

Hopkins blinked rapidly and looked at Charlie. Jake paused in his movement toward the door behind Mr. Grubb, the grin with which he had welcomed the defense of his town rapidly fading away. It took several seconds for the full import of what the stranger had said to filter through the sluggish minds of the natives and even then the hotel man did not believe he had heard aright.

"What's that?" he asked rather feebly, "the town won't be what?"

"It won't be here!" repeated Mr. Grubb, sternly, "that's what I said and that's what I meant. It will be gone — faded away — wiped off the map. And that's what it deserves!" he added.

Convinced at last that the prediction was as all-embracing as it had first seemed, the three startled residents of Lynchville decided that the hungry traveler was merely venting his wrath in this wild fashion and affected to make light of the matter.

"If I was a bettin' man I'd take you up on that, stranger," said Hopkins with a slow smile. "You must have a lot of hundreds to lose. Why, this town has been here for sixty-five years."

"It looks it," snapped Grubb.

"Who's goin' to wipe it off the map — that's what I want to know?" demanded Charlie, belligerently.

Mr. Grubb looked at them a moment from beneath his frowning brows and then turned again to the door.

"I am!" was his startling answer as he bolted out of the hotel and jumped into the buggy, leaving Hopkins and Charlie staring after him, and wondering whether it was quite safe for Jake to ride as far as the widow's with the crazy stranger.

When the Widow Meehan's excellent supper had been disposed of an hour or so later Sylvester Grubb sat in the widow's spare room and wrote a letter. That seemed an ordinary thing

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for a visitor to do, but the residents of Lynchville, most of them already safe in bed, little dreamed that the fate of their sleepy old town hung upon the point of the pen that Mr. Grubb so vigorously drove over the paper. The letter was addressed to the president of a great trunk railroad that tapped the state in that section and was gradually spreading its tentacles in various directions that promised increased earnings.

The next morning Mr. Grubb's letter, with a score or so of others, went bumping over the road to Stevensburg in the mail carrier's wagon to catch the fast mail train that whisked through the town in the evening, while Mr. Grubb himself, behind the stubborn old livery nag, was pushing along the river road from Lynchville to Steuben, keeping an appreciative eye on the rich farms past which he slowly traveled. Mine Host Hopkins and silent Charlie and Jake, the livery man, would doubtless have gaped with amazement the next day had they been able to be present in the office of the railroad president to hear Lynchville discussed by that august official and a few of his directors.

"I think we'll make a slight change in the direction of that spur from Stevensburg," announced the president. "You may remember that we intended to run it along the river on the east side as far as Lynchville and put in the bridge there. See, here's Lynchville," and he shoved forward a map of the territory.

"What's the new idea?" asked one of the directors.

"Well, I've had Grubb down there for a week or two looking over the country in detail," continued the president, "and he advises me to-day that a point about two miles below Lynchville would be far more advantageous for the bridge, taking the natural conditions into account. Of course, we would have to skip Lynchville as a way station according to that arrangement, but from what Grubb reports, I don't think it would be much loss."

"I suppose not," admitted the director who was holding the map.

"The chances are that the location of the bridge a couple of miles from Lynchville would cause a new town to spring up almost immediately," suggested the other director. "Bridges are scarce in that country and as we will have a wagon drive

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on our bridge, all the road traffic would be diverted to that point most probably."

"That's true," said the president, studying the map, "we might start a town by establishing a station there, for that matter. If it didn't sound so much like a joke we might name it in honor of our able special agent 'Grubbtown.'"

The directors dutifully joined in the president's laugh, the map was put away and the fate of Lynchville was sealed.

. . . . . .

Something less than a year later Sylvester Grubb dropped off a through train at Waynesville, the smart and thriving little town that clustered around the shining new brick station at one end of the big railroad bridge. Jake, the livery man, still chewing a straw, was on the platform clamoring for business with his hack line. On the opposite side of the track from the station towered a grain elevator at the door of which lounged its proprietor, silent Charlie. Jake halted Mr. Grubb with a yell of greeting.

"Hello, there!" he cried, "haven't seen you since I druv you to the Widow Meehan's for supper a year ago. Remember that?"

"You bet I do," said Grubb, cheerily, "and how are things going up in Lynchville?"

Jake grinned rather sheepishly.

"Well, to tell the truth, there ain't much left of Lynchville any more," he said, "the folks are all down here. You see, when the railroad come through it just naturally gave us the go-by and located down here at Waynesville."

"I see," said Mr. Grubb, gravely.

"Yes, and so, after we seen the town springin' up down here an' the business all comin' this way," continued Jake, "one by one we just decided there wasn't nothin' to do only to come down here to get it 'fore the other fellow got it all. So the town just naturally moved down here and closed up shop in Lynchville. I don't s'pose there's a dozen folks livin' up there now, leastways not any one that's tryin' to do any business. And that's how it is, you see."

"And how about my friend Hopkins?" asked Mr. Grubb, "is he still keeping the Central house where he can't serve supper after 7 o'clock?"

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Once more Jake grinned.

"Come here," he said, taking Grubb by the elbow and leading him past the station. "You see that sign over there?"

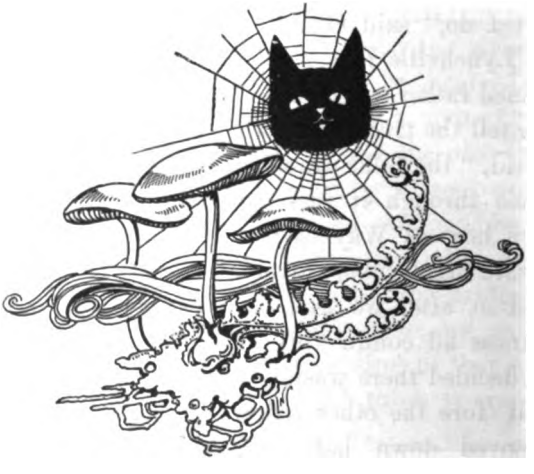
Mr. Grubb looked across the street and beheld an illuminated sign: "Hotel Hopkins. Meals At All Hours."

"That's him," said Jake shortly.

"I wonder," said Grubb, after enjoying the spectacle for a few moments, "if Hopkins would pay me that $100 bet now in case he had taken me up a year ago."

Jake stared and then slapped his thigh.

"By cracky!" he ejaculated, "you did offer to bet him $100 that Lynchville would be wiped off the map in a year, didn't you! But then," he added, "you said *you'd* do it! That's where he'd have you, you know!"



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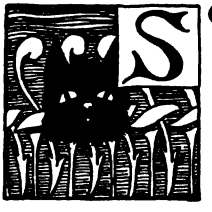
The Inch That Counted.*

BY LISETTA MEGERLE.



OME years ago, as I was journeying through a remote part of Spain, I chanced one day upon an old church. Its quaint and ancient appearance, made me curious as to what the interior might be. I passed to the rear and found to my delight an old padro, the care-taker, just ushering in a party of sightseers.

Without speaking to any one, I passed in, the old padro doubtless taking me for one of the party.

The church proved to be indeed beautiful. I lingered behind the others, as we passed from one interesting object to another, desiring to be alone, and enjoy the peace, quiet, and soothing influence always to be found in an old church.

Curiosity being soon satisfied here, the party passed out to explore other parts of the old building, but I remained to enjoy a moment or two longer the beauty and stillness.

I was about to follow when I happened to espy in a corner just a little to the side of the altar quite a small door. It stood slightly ajar, and wondering to what a door in that place could lead, I went to it and saw at once that it opened into a small closet about four feet square or less. It was perfectly empty with a high ceiling, and bare blank walls.

What caused me to step into so uninteresting a place I do not know, but I did so, and instantly, owing probably to my weight on the sill, the door closed with a sharp click, leaving me in perfect darkness.

At the same moment I heard the retreating steps and voices of the party with whom I had entered, the swinging to of the outer door and the slide of the heavy bolt into place. If I had been seen I had been forgotten.

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I tried to open the door, but all my efforts failed. It was locked and I was a prisoner. My loud knocks and calls failed to bring any one to my rescue.

There I was, locked up in a lonely old church, for how long I could not tell. I was filled with alarm, but soon had reassuring thoughts. Surely the old padro would come at night fall to attend to the candles ; or if not then, in the early morning. At most my imprisonment could not be over twelve or fourteen hours, and having lunched well about one o'clock, and it now being about four, the situation was not alarming if it was trying.

Resigning myself as well as possible to the disagreeable, to pass the time, I proceeded to examine my narrow apartment, by passing my hands carefully over the walls. I hoped to find a spring or something by which the door could be opened, and thus give me the freedom of the church, and relief from this overpowering darkness.

I found on reaching up I could just touch the ceiling with my finger tips. This surprised me, as I had an impression, as I looked into the closet, of a ceiling much higher than it now proved to be, and was still more astonished upon farther examination, to find that its surface did not touch the walls, but that there was a space of about two inches all around, as if the ceiling were suspended from above.

This was stranger than my mistake about its height, and I began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. Seating myself on the floor I tried to solve the mystery of so curious a construction, but could not think of anything I had ever seen or heard like it.

After reflecting some time, and being unable to determine upon an explanation I stood up to examine the ceiling more carefully and found to my bewilderment that I could easily touch it without fully straightening my arm. Could I be mistaken, or was I the victim of some strange hallucination?

Exceedingly puzzled, I sat down and tried to collect my wavering senses. After a time I again stood up, and found that my head just touched the ceiling. Surely I was demented, or in a delirium; but after again seating myself for a while and rising a third time to find that I could now not quite stand upright, I realized the horrible fact that the ceiling was gradually sinking.

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Even now I tried to persuade myself that I was dreaming, or that the darkness, anxiety and uncertainty had unsettled my mind, and made me imagine strange and unreal things. Summoning all my strength, to steady and control my mind, I rose once more to my feet, determined that this trial would settle the question finally. *I was bent nearly double.*

My knees refused to support me, and falling to the floor, I realized it was no delusion, but that the ceiling was slowly, noiselessly, stealthily descending upon me. Would it stop before it reached the floor, or would it come down, down, until it crushed me to atoms on the stones under my feet? My brain and limbs became numb with horror.

The cell was not sufficiently large for me to lie flat on the floor, so I sat down with my back to the wall. Occasionally when my courage and strength permitted, I would raise my hand, to find each time that the space above me had become less.

All this time I listened eagerly for the footsteps of the old padro, but no sound of human presence reached me. Deathly stillness everywhere. All I could do was to wait, and meet bravely the awful death that I knew was close at hand.

Slowly the monster above me descended, until I felt it touch my head, and then sitting upright being no longer possible, I bent over until my forehead rested on my knees. In this painful position I awaited my death. Cold sweat poured from face and hands. I could not move so much as a finger, I felt the electric currents of intense fear stir and stiffen my hair, while I crouched lower and lower, waiting for the awful moment when the thing above me should crush me into eternity.

My blood was like ice in my veins, my head seemed bursting with fierce throbs of pain, while every nerve, muscle and fibre in my body tingled with an agony too horrible to describe.

At last I felt it — the fatal touch on my back — one last moment of awful torture and then unconsciousness.

I came to myself by hearing a peculiar grinding sound all around me, and gradually remembered all, at the same time realizing that the horror above me was lifted sufficiently for me to move. I raised my hand, and to my joy found space over head.

I staggered to my feet, expecting to encounter the ceiling again

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but no, I could stand upright, and on stretching up my hand found it gone entirely out of reach.

At this moment I heard voices mingled with that queer grinding and creaking, and called as loudly as my weakness would allow. Willing hands soon came to my release.

Where had I been? At the bottom of the shaft, down which ran the ponderous weights of the old clock in the steeple.

The padro and his assistants had come at daybreak to wind up the clock.

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Margaret Kelly's Wake.*

BY S. C. BREAN.— (C. E. BARNS.)

[Although this story appeared in THE BLACK CAT eight years ago there is still a steady demand for it. It is therefore reproduced in the belief that every one who has read it will be glad to read it again. For an equally good story of adventure, mystery, humor and pathos, THE BLACK CAT will pay $500.]

THE white-capped nurse bent over the railing between the two tall globes. "Margaret Kelly, Ward 29, is dead," she said, softly. Before the official in blue she laid the usual slip, and then glided away like a phantom.

Acting Superintendent Rickard glanced up at the clock high on the whitewashed wall at his left. It lacked twelve minutes of midnight. Mechanically he drew from a drawer some black-bordered blanks and turned to the ledger.

It was a plain ambulance case. The woman had been picked up unconscious in a West-Side alley three nights before. She was, apparently, one of that vast sweep of human driftwood which ebbs and flows through a great metropolis, leaving no trace. "Tim," he called out to the sleepy attendant bunched up in the corner. "Go down into the property-room and see if among the effects of Margaret Kelly, Ward 29, there is anything by which we can identify her."

"Right, sor," yawned the Dublinite, shuffling along the tiling and down into the lower quarters of Bellevue's mazes.

Tim soon returned. Quite triumphantly he laid before his principal three letters, a bank's certificate of deposit for no mean sum, and two receipted bills — all bearing the name, "Margaret Kelly, West Thirty-third Street." The official glanced them over, making copious notes. It was not often that he so misjudged a common ambulance case. Out of the aggregation the superintendent secured five city addresses.

By the first morning's mail five friends and relatives of the late Margaret Kelly received the shocking tidings of her untimely de-

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mise, and each apprised five and twenty more. By ten o'clock there were gathered together in those three quaint rooms in the very heart of "Hell's Kitchen" where Margaret Kelly, spinster, had lived her narrow and solitary life, no less than forty persons more or less near and dear to the deceased, falling upon one another's necks, sobbing — but with one eye open to prospective loot and the other vigilantly fastened upon the co-heirs.

For, be it known, "M's Kelly" had long been recognized as the richest woman in that whole thickly tenemented block, as well as the most locally famous character. She was the only one out of ten children who had never married. They often affirmed that there was a romance in the case concerning a gallant young countryman, who, after a strange misunderstanding, had fled to Australia.

Certain it was that years ago Margaret had renounced the roseate sphere of matrimony for the fatter-pursed one of parsimony. With an amazing faculty for making money and a still more remarkable talent for saving it, she became the envy of her poverty-burdened sisters and the idol of multitudinous nephews and nieces, who more than once fell to warring over her favors. Moreover, Margaret was of a muscular mould which had won for her the sobriquet "the Amazon of Hell's Kitchen," with a tongue that wielded a lash of blue flame in righteous wrath, and a fighting valor in local inter-tenement warfare that made her highly respected, to say the least.

And yet, with all her disillusions of the heart, with all privation and trained avarice, Margaret was blessed with a big Irish heart upon which all her blood relatives pulled a close string. Many is the kinsman saved from actual dispossession, shipped back to the dear old Emerald Isle to die, or whose children were married or buried at Margaret's expense — even though these bounties narrowed her down to a bread-and-tea diet for weeks to right her conscience and recoup her purse.

How glowingly now were recounted these manifold good deeds! What tender reminiscences and grateful benedictions! Yet how deeper than all was the impatience of the heirs to discover the exact extent of those mysterious possessions before which Death had at last lifted the veil! Hours of delicious sorrow and melting

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eulogy concealed a killing impatience to get down to business. It was "Longshoreman Mike," the eldest of the nearest of kin, who took upon himself the office of chief of that clan of bandit mourners — bandits first and mourners afterward. Upon him devolved the task of breaking into chests, hampers and bureau-drawers, bringing forth secret treasures of silk. Irish lace. whitest linen and gowns that never saw the light save on St. Patrick's Day or at a wedding, passing these back to the weeping ones who properly gushed afresh over each discovery, apportioning them among themselves with self-righteous justice.

When five bankbooks were found in a bunch, there was the hush of the sepulchre till the exact aggregation was known; but when from the remote depths of a sheet-iron chest there was brought a black woolen stocking so suspiciously heavy that the treasure-trover himself widened his eyes as he came forth to empty its contents upon the oilcloth table, there was excitement indeed. A stream of gold in the coin of many realms, to the count of twelve hundred dollars, lay before them. Every heart was fired with amazement as well as cupidity, the embarrassment being relieved by Longshoreman Mike, who spoke with veritable inspiration:

"God's blessin' on the dear soul;" he sobbed, tossing the stocking into the coal-box. "Our dear Margaret must have the foinest funeral and the most glorious wake iver known in the Ward!"

"Roight and proper!" chimed in a chorus, while tears — not all of grief — coursed many a grimy furrow. Then Mike, the recognized head, was appointed to take care of "the yaller," to give the orders and pay the price. "But moind now!" cautioned one, "a shtrict accounting to us all. We're all of one blood, saints save us! but business is business, even bechune rilatives!" With one hand on his heart and eyes uplifted to the vision of the winged Margaret, Mike took the superfluous pledge. Then he proceeded to affairs of state.

It required the remainder of the day. The orders prepaid to undertaker, caterer, florist and corner liquor dealer were such as to give "Hell's Kitchen" shortness of breath. It even put to shame the New Year's feasts of the Ward Heelers' Club, already locally classic. On the following morning, then, all arrayed in their finest, the forty mourners left the tradesmen in the three

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little rooms to complete their tasks, and, with hearse in state, started, nine carriages strong, toward Bellevue.

There the first shudder awaited them. They were informed that the body of their dear Margaret had been conveyed to the morgue — that sombre pile on the edge of East River. Thither they repaired, with many groanings.

The interior of that structure resembles a safety-deposit vault under a clear dome. A hundred small steel doors close upon the row on row of separate graves of unknown and pauper dead. Morgue-Keeper Fane met the solemn concourse in the tiled corridor. He learned their mission and then led them, all shuddering and huddled with horror, through the great gates and down half-way along the bleak rows, halting before a door whereon was seen a card slipped behind a tiny pane, the name of the occupant pen-printed upon it.

The mourners shrivelled nearer, jamming their kerchiefs into their mouths, breathless in silence. The door swung wide. Seizing the sliding litter, the morgue-keeper drew it half-way out, disclosing the upper half of its lifeless burden, and stood gazing into the semicircle of expressionless faces about him.

There was no chorus of wails, no fainting, no tearing of hair. Instead, it was Mike who broke the appalling spell with a gulp of protest. "Look 'ere — m' Gawd!" he choked. "Thot ain't Margaret Kelly, you blunderin' idjit —"

"Isn't it, though?" rebuked the custodian, re-examining the card.

"Naw!" came back the rebuff, with the reinforcement of clenched fists shaken menacingly, for Mike had sampled the stock of the wake quite to the fighting point. "Thot ain't our Margaret. Why, sor, if anny livin' man were to tell the corpse of the rale Margaret Kelly that she looked the loikes o' that, she'd rise up off that slab and break his face, so she would. Our Margaret Kelly, sir, was six foot one, and ivery inch a leddy!"

A volley of reinforcing protest supplemented this family columbiad delivered with such proud gusto. The morgue-keeper pushed back the litter, closed the door and fled to the telephone in his private office. "Superintendent," he said, calling up Bellevue, "the friends of the late Margaret Kelly, whose body was brought down

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here last night, fail to identify. There is a mistake somewhere."

"Hold the wire," came the anxious answer.

Down into the property-room the superintendent hastened on a tour of investigation. He returned a few minutes later, his face blazing. "Tim," he growled out to the sleepy attendant in the corner, "you are discharged!" Then over the 'phone again, "It was all the fault of my blundering help here," he said. "He gave me the wrong documents out of the property-room. You see, there were *two* Margaret Kellys: One an unknown, Ward 29; the other, Margaret Kelly, of West Thirty-third Street, Ward 31. You've got the unknown down there. The other was just discharged fifteen minutes ago, alive and well. Break the good news to the mourners, with apologies, et cetera. Good-bye."

Joyously the morgue-keeper conveyed the glad tidings to the assembled forty. They stood still in mute amazement, with dry eyes and limp jaws, literally frozen to the stone tiling. "Good Gawd, mon! Y' don't really mane to tell me that Margaret Kelly's aloive — "

"Precisely, sir."

"Howly Mither!" And Mike felt his soul ooze out of his shoes. To face Margaret Kelly dead were disagreeable enough, but to face her alive now — the very thought drove him into the corner, where he took six fingers of liquid reinforcement at a gulp and tossed the flask through the rear door into the river. As there were murmurs of a lynching, Morgue-Keeper Fane retreated into the autopsy room.

Meanwhile a most impressive personage alighted from a Seventh Avenue car at the Thirty-third Street corner and started westward. As she turned into her familiar doorway, a bevy of little children uttered a combined shriek and ran pell-mell into hiding. In the gloom of the first landing she greeted an old friend, who immediately threw up her hands and fell in a dead faint. By the time she had reached her own apartments on the third floor, the newcomer was in a mood for any surprises.

She found plenty of them. The caterer was uncovering a big frosted cake, the florist was banking the mantel with white roses and the liquor dealer was setting up a miniature gin-mill in the corner cupboard. At the threshold the intruder paused, her face

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blank as a bluestone image, her shoulders thrown back and knuckles dug deep into her ribs. Finally she found voice:

"Oh ho, now!" she droned. "An' what's all this? A weddin'?"

The man in the white apron gave her a glance of contempt over his rampart of bottles. "Weddin' nothing," he snarled. "Can't yer see it's a funer'l?"

The woman's keen eyes blinked. A hideous smile played over the bloodless lips. "Railly now — a funer'l! I niver would have known it." Then with bitter sarcasm, "Do y' moind tellin' me whose funeral it is?"

"Why, poor old Margaret Kelly's funeral, o' course."

The newcomer strained up on her very tiptoes with gathering scorn, the unkempt feathers upon her grizzled head brushing the door-frame above. "The divvil it is!" she groaned, taking a forward step and clenching her big red fists. "An' do y' moind tellin' me who's goin' to pay for Margaret Kelly's funeral?"

The man in the apron gave a shrug. "Oh don't *you* worry," he said. "It's all paid for."

The frame of a giantess swelled like a thundercloud. "With whose money, you young blackguard — with whose money?"

The man pointed to the rifled iron chest in the corner. "To be sure, with Margaret Kelly's money — whose else?"

He might have said more, but the Nemesis of "Hell's Kitchen" was upon him in an instant, and riot began. There were wailings and tearing of hair, the women supplying the wailings, the men the hair. "Out with y', dogs, brutes, varmin, brigands!" she screamed, making terrific onslaught upon both tradesmen and their wares, seizing a floral piece bearing the words "Gone Home" in red carnations on a field of white roses, and smashing it upon the florist's head. "'Gone Home,' is it? she cried, "Y' mean 'Come Home,' y' pirates — yes, come home just in time to save a rag or two to me back and the price of a loaf. Out wid y', haythen, vipers, robbers! Out wid y', or I'll murder y' all in cold blood, by the saints, so I will. Och, mither, mither! Am I alive or am I dead?" And as there seemed to be no doubt about it in the minds of the vanquished, the tradesmen fled in confusion, dodging bottles of the peaty old Irish which narrowly missed them

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and crashed against the stair wall, leaving great stains. Then into the armchair the Amazon flopped in a state of semi-hysterics amid the wreckage, while on emerging from the lower door the tradesmen ran into the melancholy procession on the way from Bellevue and the morgue. "Go, call the police!" cried one. "There is a mad woman upstairs pounding the place to atoms."

"Better the place than me," responded the mourner chief with a sigh, proceeding still slower. It was a sorrowful band that had started out an hour before; but for blue devils of despair it was nothing compared with the return journey, which resembled a march of martyrs to the gibbet.

By the time the last landing was reached, the forty were reduced to just six, and they the heaviest weights of the crowd. Guardedly they peeped around corners and through the door-chinks, confronting at last that portraiture of wasted rage and woe pinioned down by utter collapse in the midst of her ravage. Then, with haggard eyes and hanging jaws, in fawning suppliance they advanced, pouring out their inmost souls:

"Glory be to hiven, Margaret Kelly!" cried Mike, "sure it was all a mistake. It weren't you at all, at all; but some other miserable outcast craythur wid your own name, Margaret Kelly, that were lyin' stiff in the margue, while you, the saints be praised! are home here wid us, aloive and well, and we ag'in the happiest mortals on earth —"

The swollen eyes widened, and a sinister gleam broke from their depths. "Y' look it!" shot back the shaft of irony, "y' look it — Divvil take the whole boonch!" Then, in the bitter silence, "So y' t'ought there was goin' to be a funeral and a wake did y'? Well, if you had come ten minutes sooner, there would have been — several."

One after another the mourners crept back and began restoring the lace, silk, shawls, gowns and all as to a shrine. It was a pitiful rite, performed in silence; for, as nothing could possibly be said in mitigation of their unknowing offence, they said nothing.

It was only Mike who had the courage of his vindication now: "Y' must not blame us, Margaret," he groaned. Great globules of sweat gathered in the wrinkles as he drew forth the summons from the hospital. "Look at this black-bordered liar, Margaret,

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look at it! Ah, Margaret, it is yourself that has a pretty case against the city for funeral expinses over a live corpse, and heavy damages for wounded affections — "

"Shut up wid your politics!" yelped the convalescent, "and give me a small dhrop of whushky, or I'll have a raylapse, and then you'll have me where you want me — tin feet under sod."

There was a skurrying to do her bidding. Margaret drank deep. Rallying, she looked abroad over the wreckage of her madness. Then a new terror came into her soul. "Moike, Moike!" she groaned, "tell me now, on your honor before God, what have y' done wid that shtockin'?"

The big longshoreman staggered back. A sudden sickness took the courage out of his heart. He set his teeth and threw out his arms like a gorilla at bay. "Margaret Kelly," he moaned, "there's no use lyin' to y', an' by the saints, I won't. The shtockin' — well, here goes! The shtockin' is gone!"

The convalescent rose, but fell back again. "Gone — gone?" she cried in a voice that brought terror to every listener.

"At least, more than half of it, Margaret. There were twelve hundred dollars in the black rag — "

"Nothing more?"

"May God judge me!" was the answer, as the longshoreman thrust up his clenched hands till they almost struck the ceiling, as if his honor had been impeached. "We counted it there on the table, all of us; and then I threw the shtockin' into the coal-box."

The convalescent covered her face with her hands. "Now you have killed me," she moaned. "Merciful saints! What have I done to bring down upon me such afflictions?"

The accused took a stride forward. "Margaret, say whativer you will, I swear there was not one penny more than — "

"Divvil take the money!" screamed the convalescent, striking her forehead. "Did I say annything about money, man?"

"But, Margaret — er — "

"I didn't mean money. I meant — something else — " The swaying figure bowed in an attitude of silent grief.

The longshoreman glanced into the astonished faces, then swept his hand over his forehead with a significant sign. Had poor Margaret lost her mind? He pressed closer. "For the

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love of hiven, Margaret," he pursued, "what do you mane? What was in that black shtockin' — "

"Something worth more than life to me," she answered calmer now, although it was the calm of despair. "And now it's gone and me poor heart is broke, me poor heart is broke."

The clustering group stood dumb. What beside the gold did the old black stocking contain; Visions of diamonds, pearls and other precious treasures swept before them, supplementing the recollections of the bankbooks and securities. Only "Longshoreman Mike" seemed to possess presence of mind now. He backed over to the coal-box and began digging with his great chimpanzee-like claws among the coals. Suddenly his square-jowled visage uplifted triumphantly. In his clutch he dragged the black length to view like a python from its lair. "Here it is, Margaret," he cried, "just as I threw it aside." He came forward and threw the rag into the convalescent's lap.

A sudden change came over the whole attitude. A new strength came into Margaret Kelly, a new illumination, a sort of spiritual revelation enveloping her. Into the dark depths she thrust her hand. Before the amazed eyes of the onlookers, who thought the receptacle empty, Margaret drew forth a faded letter and a small photograph, which was more than half obliterated with kisses. One grateful look, and the woman fell forward upon her knees, pouring out her heart in thankful prayer, burying her face in the simple tokens.

The assembled kith and kin gazed upon this drama of a solitary life as if it were quite beyond their solving. No one ventured a word, yet every one knew that for the first time in all their lives they had turned the one forbidden page in the lonely spinster's history of long watching and sustaining hope.

"Oh, Moike!" cried the woman, regaining her seat and thrusting the tender tokens into her bosom. "It's all turnin' out right, and I'm a sorry wretch not to be thankful for many blissin's, so I am. Did you say that it were a poor outcast who were mistaken for me down there in the dead house? Then go back with the hearse and shroud and all, for which, please God, I'll have no use for many a year, and bring the poor haythin craythur here, where we'll give her a dacint burial as one of our very own.

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Aye, don't stand starin' at me loike that, fer I'm not gone daft. I mane it all, ivery word. I don't care what may be her pasht or prisent. No one that bears the name of Margaret Kelly shall go to the Potther's Field while I live to chate the grave-digger."

The longshoreman stood aghast. "Do you really mane it, Margaret?" he queried, with surprise lighting up that look of compassion.

"From the botthom of me heart, I do," was the firm rejoinder. "Go bring the poor wretch from that accursed place; for, bad as 'Hell's Kitchen' may be, the margue, God save us from it! is worse. Bring her here in the little black house I thank hiven I have no use for, even if I do own it; and we'll give the stranger such a funeral as was niver known in the Ward, so we will —"

"An' his honor, the Mayor, shall pay the freight, eh?"

"Right and truly. Call the praist too, and do it all up in the dacentest style of the art, jus' as if it were for me. But first, jus' another wee dhrop and all join in, to swear that we're glad we're livin,' nor jilious of the dead for all the good said of 'em."

The guests drew near, clapping their hands with joy — they who were but an hour gone wielding their cambrics. "Margaret, you're a trump and no mistake!" cried Mike, striking his chest.

"Long live Aunt Margaret! It's we who are proud of you, b' hivens!" chimed in the chorus. Then, amid much fluttering and sputtering, the pledge of family fealty was passed from heart to heart — such a pledge as was never known in all that humble region before. Soon after Longshoreman Mike drove away with the undertaker, while all hands fell to putting things to rights again after the ravage, pondering meanwhile not more upon the miracle of that good soul's home-coming than upon the romance about which she had so long remained silent.

Late in the evening of that eventful day the assembled forty, now generously reinforced by as many more, for the tidings of the hour had travelled fast and far, sat semicircled about the hostess, arrayed in her smartest gown. They were willing tarryers, for the bounty was of excellent variety and abundance — "the thrate of his Honor the Mayor," as Margaret grandiloquently termed it, — offering that dignitary at least one toast in four, reserving the rest for herself.

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But when the undertaker's attendants entered the populous tenement, and above the measured tread of the bearers of the heavy burden could hear the longshoreman's "Stiddy, now! Thrate her like one of us. Careful around the turn now, do y' moind!" a shudder ran through the assemblage, for every one realized the presence of the dead in truth.

With many puffings and grunts that sounded above the awful hush, the "little black house," now occupied by an unexpected tenant, was deposited in the further room from the crowded chamber where feasting and good cheer were so suddenly quelled by the tragedy of life.

"Only to think of it!" Margaret kept echoing over and over. "Here I am, aloive and well, wid all me good frinds about me, and there, alone, unknown, frindless, widout even a mourner —"

"Come, dry up, Margaret, for the love o' hiven!" put in Mike, entering the room and facing the pallid faces, "and be glad thot it ain't yourself. Ah, but she has a smile on her face, that poor sufferin' nobody, as if she knew that now, even if none cared for her livin', we all are doin' our best for her dead. Come in, folks. Come in and take a look of the poor outcast, for, damme, she has the look of havin' been onct a rale leddy. Come in —"

"Nivver!" A voice broke out of the chorus of shudders.

"But *I* will!" It was Margaret who leaped up courageously, as if to challenge them all. "I am not afraid of the woman who bears me name, dead or aloive. Lead on, Mike."

Mike led, and the company, all a-tremble, snailed a long way after them. Suddenly a strange low cry came from the far chamber. It nearly froze the hearts of the listeners, for they realized that it was Margaret's. Instantly she came plunging back, her face expressive of emotion almost tragic, and flung herself into the chair again, seizing the glass which rattled against her teeth as she drank with a choking sound. "It is Margaret Kelly — it is, it is!" she moaned. "Ah, my God! will miracles never cease?"

The company pressed about her with eyes darting flames of terror. It was Mike who first found voice, as usual. "Margaret Kelly," he said almost sternly, "have you gone stark mad?"

The woman did not seem to hear. She drew with trembling

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fingers the little tokens which she had deposited in her bosom after rescuing them from the black stocking. "Poor child!" she droned. "It is the way with disappointed love: it drives some to the savings bank, some to the gutthers. It drove this Margaret to the bank, that Margaret to the margue."

No one offered any elucidation of this enigma, so the woman continued: "Sit down, me frinds, for I have a long shtory to tell ye — aye, and a true one. Oh, you will never regret. Do y' see this picture — these letthers — this lock o' hair? Listen!"

The company sank back into their seats in the tense silence. "It is the unspoken history of a good woman's first and last love affair, if I do say so mesilf, and you will belave it, ivery word." She made a gesture to close the door of the middle room, beyond which were gathered a few of the curious whom the mysterious power of death draws rather than repels.

"It is jus' tin years ago, comin' Saint Pathrick's Day, thot I first met Danny McFee, at the ball of the 'Ancient Order of Hibernians.' An' whin I say thot he was as foine a young gintleman as iver breathed the breath of hiven and made love to an honest girl, I mane it on me heart, whativer has since come bechune to part us. Nor was I the only one to fall in love wid him thot night — but no matther. Danny was the ideel of the thrue man, a soldier in form and manners, tinder with the fair, wid some money and plinty of promise as a risin' lawyer in the full of the political shwim.

"Well, I moight as well confess, unbeknownst to anny of ye, Danny and I mit of a Sunday afternoon at ould Aunt Bridget's in Harlem for a stroll in the park to make our plans and build castles on hope, for we had everything to make the heart of the lover glad. During the wake we wrote daily letthers; and for fear some one might discover it, I took a private letther-box around the corner on the avenue where a Frinch Jew kept a cigar and news store. For many months I recaved the daily confession of the brave man's love, such as I treasure to this day. But suddenly, though I was faithful in ivery word and thought to me Danny, I got no replies to me letthers, though he swore that he had regularly done his duty. This was the cause of the first coolness. But one day I found a letther in the box — and such a

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letther it was! It called me ivery swate name in the catalogue, makin' appointments and endin' with untold millions of kisses. It was signed 'Tom Farrell,' but such a name I niver knew. Well, I t'rew the letther away; but the nixt day, instead of one from me Danny, there was another from 'Tom Farrell.' And on the day followin' another, so that by Sunday I had foive. With much misery then I called at Aunt Bridget's, resolved to lay the whole mysterious matther before Danny, for I was beside mesilf wid worryin.'

"But, alas, alone wid Danny I lost heart. I saw from his coolness that he thought me lyin' when I said I had not recaved his letthers; and I — well, I thought him playin' the fool wid me. I saw trouble brewin', but did not think it would come so soon. But to me shame the next mornin' I found the package of strange letthers missin' from me pocket, and then came a messenger from Danny wid a cruel note. 'It's all over, Margaret,' says he. 'That pack of letthers explains everythin'. I found thim on Aunt Bridget's flure, where you dropped thim. My God! why did you not tell me, like an honest girl,' says he, 'that you loved this man more than me? But that's the end. I am writin' this on board of the *Juliet,* bound for Austhralia,' says he, 'so good-bye! Be happy wid your "Tom Farrell," whoever he is,' says he, 'but truer to him than to me, or you will rue it. Good-bye, foriver, Margaret, though you are the only woman I iver loved or iver will love, so help me God,' says he," and the narrator bent down, her lank frame riven with sobs.

"Well, me frinds, this shock well nigh brought me to me bed, so it did, but the next day I recaved another, which did it completely. Wid all me poor soul burnt out wid rage at the injustice, ashamed and sick at heart, I wint around the corner to give up the kay to the accursed letther-box. Opening it for the last time, there, to me horror, I found another wan of thim 'Tom Farrell' letthers, and a damon's fury came into me heart. I had torn the thing in twain whin, looking up, I saw a pale little woman enter, advance straight up to me letther-box and stand stock dumb. Thin, as she turned and saw the rent sheet in my hand, she flew at me like a tigress. 'Give me that letther!' she screamed, clawin' my face to shreds. 'Who are you? Is it you who have

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been sthalin' me letthers for the past week?' she yowled, her face purple wid righteous anger.

"'No,' says I, calmly, 'it's you who have been sthalin' mine.'

"'Tis a lie in your t'roat!' says she. An' I now d'clare to God that your thavin' of me letthers has lost me the besht mon in the worruld —'

"'Wrong again,' says I. 'You may have lost the next besht; but it's I who have lost the besht, t'rough your thavin' of me letthers.'

"'I'll have you arristed!' says she.

"'I'll have you hanged!' says I.

"'What's your name?' says she.

"'Margaret Kelly,' says I.

"'Wha-a-at!' says she.

"'Before the livin' God!' says I.

"The little woman covered her face wid her hands. 'An' so is mine,' she moaned. And we two Margaret Kellys stood starin'.

"'Thin, if this letter is yours,' says I, 'others that I have are yours too.'

"'An' I can return the complimint,' says she. 'For here is a boonch of love letthers from a mon I niver heard of.' An' she passed over to me the precious boondle of poor Danny's declaration of undyin' affiction. Thin we jumped into that blundherin' sheeny, the both o' us, for he had given us both the same box, thinkin' we were one and the same, and aiche av us lost a good mon in consequince. An' whin we got t'rough wid the blundherin' postmaster, he weren't fit for a doormat to a mud cabin.

"But, proud born as I was, I took me poison like a leddy. Divvil a bit did I explain to Danny, even had I known his whereabouts. I jus' bookled down to makin' money and savin' it; while she, poor craythur, fell away to a shadow after thot, for I met her once or twict, and losin' her hold on life, she wint to the wrong. Ye know, disappointed affiction works different ways on different peoples — the makin' of some, the breakin' of others; an' though I still love Danny McFee wid all me poor heart, divvil a step would I take to repair his injustice or —"

Margaret had risen and stood quivering, with her clenched hands thrown wide; but her mood of vindication was interrupted by the

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sudden presence of one of the guests from the still chamber beyond. His face wore a peculiar expression as he said, "There's a man at the other door. Has a boondle of flowers. Says he knows the poor dead woman and wants to pay his last respicts — "

"Let him in!" cried Margaret. "By hivens! it's the mysterious 'Tom Farrell' so it is. Let him in. Ah, now that I have seen the little woman who robbed me of my happiness widout knowin', I think I'd loike to set eyes on the man who, from the same cause, robbed us both." She started to follow her leader, the company fired with a strange sense of curiosity.

By the time they reached the threshold of the darkened room, however, they all paused, for the stranger had entered, laid a mass of white roses upon the casket, and was kneeling beside it with his cheek against the lid, his face hidden in his encircling arms. This pitiful rite brought a hush like that of the sepulchre itself; and when at last the mourner lifted his bearded countenance and straightened, tall and almost spectral in the semi-darkness, he gazed upon the astonished faces that gleamed white and phantasmal against the deep shadows.

"Thank you, my good people," were his first words after recovering from his embarrassment. "I know that I have no right to be here, but I could not resist, for I once knew this good woman well — aye, loved her and love her memory now."

The plaintive quiver thickened many a throat with compassion, and more than one advanced as if to offer the stranger comfort.

"Yes, good friends, I loved her, and she was once my promised wife. But there came a misunderstanding between us, and fool that I was, instead of solving the mystery which was the cause of it, I laid all the blame on the innocent, and we parted, never to meet again till now with the Great Shadow between. You who are young, listen and take warning. If ever you love and are bound to another with all your heart and mind, and there comes a cloud between, do not part so. Wave the cloud away, then part if you must. That is all. I thank you more than I can say, kind friends, for this precious moment, and I shall carry the memory of it to my dying hour. And now, before I go, may I have just one last look at the departed? Do I ask too much?"

It was Longshoreman Mike who came forward, his cheeks

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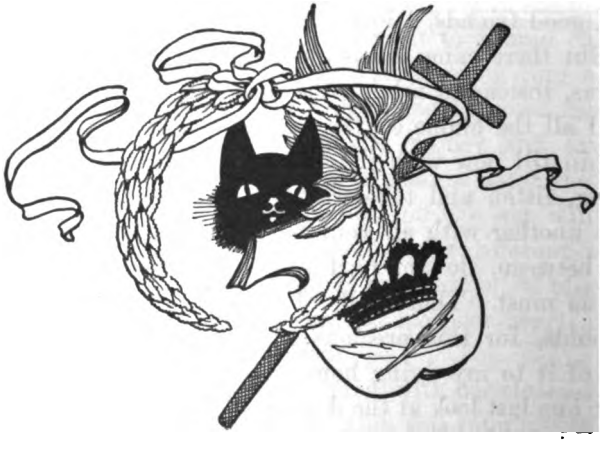
glistening with tears. "Stranger," he faltered, "it's you that can't ask anythin' here that you can't have to your heart's contint, God savin' you, sor!" Reverently he removed the lid from over the still face, motioning for the light.

The stranger bowed low and with that stony calm which is expressive of deepest emotion in a strong man. For some few tickings of the old clock he gazed upon the marble features, then leaped back with a strange exclamation. "But that — that is not Margaret Kelly," he cried. "I — I must have been misinformed." He tore at his neckband as if choking. "That is not Margaret Kelly — *my* Margaret — "

"Nor ours aythor," groaned Mike. Then, dropping the lid, he rushed upon the stranger, who recoiled from him. "F' the love o' Gawd, man, who are you?" he panted. "Are you not the mysterious 'Tom Farrell?'"

The sound of that name was like a blow that brings blood. "I — 'Tom Farrell?'" groaned the stranger. "No, no, God forbid! That's the man whose unknowing wrong it was that parted my love and me. My name is Daniel McFee!"

A wild voice pierced the gloom. Out of the shadows there came a woman's figure, swift as a whirlwind. "Danny, Danny, Danny!" she called out, in the agony and the joy of her heart, and flung herself bodily into the stranger's arms. It was the original Margaret Kelly.



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The Watcher of the Dam.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

AMRAH DHAS, the Guardian of the Waters, crouched on the stone coping of the Chutalana Dam that lay above the village of Lagrore, and spoke softly to the waters that gurgled against the embankment. Hamrah Dhas conversed frequently with the waters. Every wavelet that rolled across the great dam carried a question that flayed his soul.

Now and again he raised his voice reprovingly. Big waves, crumpled up by the breeze that came down from the Sikkan Pass, sprawled over the edge of the coping and wet the great granite slabs upon which he sat. The Guardian hurriedly pulled his bare feet away and wedged a prayer for his eternal salvation into the excuses he was muttering. The big waves terrified Hamrah Dhas. They appeared to protest haughtily against the excuses that he poured forth in a hollow monotone.

"Be patient, little waters," he cried, excitedly. "The time has not come for you to be unloosed, wherefore I do not lift my hand. Do not be angry with me; the fault is not mine. I am Hamrah Dhas, thy humble servant, and I wait and watch."

But the murmuring of the Guardian had little effect upon the waters. The light breeze from the Pass was strengthened by an army of aggressive little puffs that came panting from the snow-capped Himalayas, and the wavelets leapt angrily at the stone coping. The Hindu tucked his legs away from their foamy lips and cried his entreaties into the gathering gloom.

"Yes, yes, I know I am to blame," he shrieked, "but I was only one among the ten thousand who chained you. It is true I helped Onslow Sahib to fence you round with the big stones that the mule teams carried from the quarries of Jeddelpore,

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but my share in the whole work is like to the flame of a candle beside the noonday sun. Be patient, little waters, the time has not come."

He listened for a few minutes to the sound of the choppy waters and spoke again as if in answer to a charge he heard in their wild gurgling.

"Yes, it is true, but I was as clay in the hands of the potter, and the whip of the serang was heavy on my back. What could I do, little waters? Onslow Sahib was a stern man, and the great drunken Trevellyan would not listen to excuses. It is true they are now dead, but they put their names on the brass plate above the floodgates, and I can do nothing. What did Onslow Sahib say when the dam was finished? 'Hearken to this, you black devils,' he said. 'I have put my name and the name of my chief on this plate above the waters, and while our names remain there the dam will last.' Little waters, be merciful! How can I unloose you while their names remain on the plate? But I, Hamrah Dhas, will remain till the gods will it that the plate shall fall, and then I will set you free."

The night crept down from the Poorana Hills. The big dam lay weird and gloomy in the twilight. Little waves, whipped forward by the breeze, rushed out of the blackness like white accusing fingers, and Hamrah Dhas moaned fearfully. He wriggled along the arched coping like a crippled serpent, and groaned in agony under the reprimands he heard in the gurgling of the waters.

Hamrah Dhas had been guardian of the Chutalana Dam for twenty years. Trevellyan, C. B., who planned the work, had recommended him for the position when the water of the Peewana had been turned into the basin, and the keeper had listened to the waves night and day. At first they murmured drowsily, faintly protesting against their imprisonment, but as the years wore on, they shrieked angrily to Hamrah Dhas when the wind from the Sikkan Pass harried the wavelets that could not escape from their assaults. In the dark nights their wild reproaches dragged the Guardian from his couch in the dirty dak-bungalow, and in fear and trembling he would answer the charges which his mad brain heard in the noises they made

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against the barrier. He lived in a hell of his own making. The waves maddened him. They called him ever to destroy the barricade that kept them prisoner on the hillside. The desire to do so was great within the mind of Hamrah Dhas, but he remembered the oath he had taken to Trevellyan twenty years before, and, furthermore, he was afraid of the inscription on the brass plate embedded in the stone above the floodgates.

Hamrah Dhas was much afraid of the brass plate. Trevellyan had said that the dam would stand while it remained in the stone, and the prophecy impressed the Guardian. He looked at it morning, noon and night, but it showed no sign of leaving its resting place. With his mission schooling he laboriously read the inscription over and over again, and when the waves were very angry he would chant it to them in an effort to quiet their wrath. It was a pompous inscription, but it had little effect on the waters. It even seemed to stir them to greater fury when Hamrah Dhas, in a high monotone, chanted loudly:

This dam was declared open by
His Excellency Lord Frederick Loftus Pincherley,
V. C., K. C. M. G.,
in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of
Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria;
Havelock Harrington Fernley being then
Governor of the Province of Jaycumpore.
The work was begun and carried to completion by
Densmore Eardley Trevellyan, C. E., and
Marcus Allington Onslow, M. C. E.

The Guardian of the Waters imitated the manner of the British tourists who read the inscription with awe and reverence when they inspected the Chutalana Dam, and it was a magnificent elocutionary effort. But the results were nil. The waters had no regard for Lord Frederick Loftus Pincherley or Her Gracious Majesty, and each night the agony of the Guardian increased. He couldn't sleep. The waters shrieked to him! The little waves cried like lost souls as they tried to escape the buffeting of the mountain wind that rushed them round and round their prison! Night after night Hamrah Dhas would crouch upon the wet wall and murmur his excuses to the

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white-capped waters that rushed like hissing snakes along the barrier.

"Have I not suffered?" he screamed. "Has not my punishment been great? Did not my child fall upon your bosom by the great tower and come back to me lifeless on the eighth day at the floodgates? Did not my father die in the dak-bungalow when Qnslow Sahib gave me the post? Did not my wife fly with the unclean Jhil who came to mend the masonry above the middle tower? Yes; I have suffered for the share I took in chaining you here where the winds of space could ruffle your bosom, but I will watch and wait for the time."

The gusts tore down from the hills like troops of Pathan horsemen, and the dam billowed under the attack. The Guardian bowed his head on the wet stones and wept. His accusing conscience totaled up his labors in the making of the great stone barrier that held the Peewana in check, and he screamed in pain.

"Be merciful, little waters!" he yelled. "I will watch till the plate falls from the stone. Yes, I will watch till the plate falls from —"

He stopped abruptly and leaned forward as if he heard a voice speaking in the darkness above the waters.

"I am listening," he cried. "Speak on."

The waves splashed upon the coping and drenched his thin rags, but he didn't move. Like a sculptured figure he sat with neck outstretched. The mad brain of Hamrah Dhas was receiving instructions.

Presently he stood up and shook the water from his clothes.

"Oh, little waters, it might be done," he gurgled fearfully. Again he stopped to listen.

"Yes, yes, it could be done," he shouted. "I could tear it down!"

In the black darkness he crept along the coping towards the bungalow, his heart throbbing mightily. He had waited twenty years for his instructions, and now they had come out of the gloom that covered the dam. He would tear down the plate and make the prophecy of Trevellyan nought.

The roar of the waves strengthened the arms of Hamrah

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Dhas as he swung the heavy mattock and attacked the pillar in which the plate was imbedded. The waves would be free at last. He would see the waters of the Peewana go tumbling down the hillside, and his soul would have peace. With a mighty effort he wrenched the brass from the embrasure and rushed back towards the dirty bungalow.

Down below in the valley the lights of the village of Lagrore twinkled in the darkness. Hamrah Dhas had a sister in Lagrore, and he thought of her for a moment as he carried a parcel down to the passage near the floodgates. She was the wife of a metal-worker living near the temple, and he wondered if he would have time to tell her of the danger when the Peewana burst its bonds. But even as he stood pondering, the waves screamed at his delay, and he hurried madly.

As he carried the packages down into the passageway he thought of his god-given luck. The roadmakers had stored their explosives in a ruined temple near the dam, and Hamrah Dhas would use them to bring peace to the waters and his own soul. Perhaps the voice that had urged him to pull down the plate had also urged the roadmakers to leave the explosives in a place where he could get them.

Hamrah Dhas was joyful. He danced around and clapped his hands as he rammed the tremendous charge into the blind end of the passage. His sufferings were nearly at an end. The sister's fate did not trouble him. What did his sister know of the nights of agony that he passed on the coping waiting to hear the word that would tell him how his soul could obtain rest? What did Lagrore know of his sufferings? What did Trevellyan or the Queen know? Trevellyan had chained him to the post with an oath and left him there to suffer the tortures of hell.

He put the last plug of dynamite in position, put a match to the fuse, and then, grasping the brass plate, he fled up the hillside.

. . . . . .

It was Eastman, Superintendent of the Jeddelpore Police, who found Hamrah Dhas on the evening after Lagrore had been swept into oblivion. The Guardian lay face downwards on the

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hill, high above the track of the flood, and Eastman made a hasty examination.

"Snakebite," he murmured, standing up. "Some old snake was disturbed by the roar of the water and thinking the nigger was the cause of it, bit him as they were both scrambling out of the danger zone."

But the plate had more effect on the snake than it had on the waters. When Eastman turned over the brass he found a crushed cobra beneath; for when Hamrah Dhas fell, the heavy metal square bearing the names of Lord Frederick Loftus Pincherley and Her Gracious Majesty had fallen upon the reptile and crushed the life out of it.

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The Vacant Seat.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

IT was noted that wherever he sat there always remained a vacant seat beside him on his left. At the play the seat next him on that side was never occupied — at church it was the same. In the cars, when he traveled, or on the water, there always remained that vacant seat on his left.

It would seem that he was accompanied through life by an invisible companion, who remained at his side as faithfully as space itself.

"He is mad!" said many. "He goes nowhere but he purchases an extra seat that he may always have a vacant chair beside him. No sane man would act so."

"No, he is not mad, but he is a coward!" said others. "He fears that an enemy will some day sit beside him on his left and stab him in the heart!"

"He is neither mad nor a coward," whispered two or three. "There is no vacant seat beside him — a murdered man's ghost sits there!"

So men and women reasoned about the riddle, but the man who was haunted by a vacant chair on his left heeded them not.

Sometimes an uninformed stranger, or again a rash acquaintance, would seek to occupy the vacant seat, but the act would be quickly repented. A swift glance and a low-spoken word of caution from the owner of the unoccupied seat had about them a subtle power that stayed the rashest, and the offending party would murmur a hasty apology and withdraw.

Occasionally, but so rarely that those few who had once witnessed the incident were unable to support their statement by a second example, the man would seem to speak softly as to an in-

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visible companion on his left. But he may have been merely musing to himself or have addressed some passing ghost of memory. There was nothing in his manner to show that he thought the vacant seat on his left was ever occupied.

It was at the play that the mystery ended. It was a love-lit, lavender-sweet play of the period of the man's youth. He sat alone in a box on the right, half withdrawn into the shadow of the curtains, while close on his left was the haunting vacant seat.

Suddenly those near him in the orchestra saw him start up with a poignant cry of joy and bend over the empty chair.

"Alice!" he whispered. "I have kept this vacant seat beside me all these long years that it might be ready when you chose to come back to me — *and to-night you have come!*"

His arms closed tenderly around the ghostly vacancy of the empty chair, as a lover's arms about the form of a living woman. A moment he remained thus, then there was a heavy fall, and an usher swiftly drew together the curtains of the box.

The man haunted by a vacant seat was dead!

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Chivalry in the Sheep Camp.*

BY ARTHUR CHAPMAN.

THERE has been lots of crazy English come to the West, but fer hullsale absorbin' of the loco I never seen one to match Sir Cyril Putney, who used to own the big 78 outfit on the Powder River range, but who took to herdin' sheep when the cow business become nothin' but a distressed echo.

In the capacity of foreman of the 78, and later as camp tender for the Double-O sheep outfit, I was throwed in a good deal with Sir Cyril, and will say for him that I have never heard of a man who could accept a fall in fortunes more graceful. It didn't seem to bother him none to think that yestiddy he was owner of cattle on a thousand hills, and to-day he was bein' blatted at by sheep with a thousand yells. He shore took his medicine philisophic, and it'd be a hull lot better for the world in gen'ral if they was more Sir Cyril Putneys in the human herd.

As Shakespeare says, one touch of loco makes the hull world kin, and it was Sir Cyril's little offness that made him so even tempered, whether he was bossin' seventy good cow-punchers of his own or herdin' sheep for an outfit of bond-clippin' dudes. Sir Cyril's evidence of crazy-weed lunches took the form of ancestor-worship. He was clean daft on the subjict of meedieval hist'ry, and when he was runnin' the 78 ranch he done his best to reform the hull territory of Wyomin' accordin' to Burke's Peerage and the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and he succeeded well enough to have about sixty square miles of cow country wonderin' whether it was livin' in the day of Richard the Lion-Hearted or Billy the Kid.

At that time Wyomin' was an infant that didn't have a

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single ancestor in its hull pack outfit. It had cactus and longhorns and Injuns in plenty, but askin' a man if he had any ancestors was the same as throwin' down a six-gun on him. But Sir Cyril had brought a hull gall'ry full of ancestors' portraits along with him. He had the picters hung around the walls of the 78 ranch house till there wasn't space enough left for a gun rack. Furthermore he brung along a shipment of armor — the kind that used to be turned out by the boilermaker to the king in the days before Mr. Colt had thunk out the little toy that makes all men equal. He'd set around admirin' these ancestors and their stove-pattern clothes, and talkin' about their great deeds — the ancestors I mean, not the clothes — till he'd outlast the kyotes that was allus howlin' outside of evenin's.

"Jim," he'd say to me, "them was days when it must have been worth a man's while to live. Look at that biggest coat of mail, there. That was worn by my noble ancestor, Sir Arthur Putney, who was one of the greatest fighters that ever couched a lance."

Then he'd go on tellin' me all the battles this big Sir Arthur was in, and all the time he'd be mixin' our whisky with water outen a bottle that had a nozzle on it jest like a railroad water tank, and purty soon he'd get to spoutin' poetry about the good knights whose swords are rust and whose bones are dust, allus windin' up with that one about Sir Galahad:

> My good blade carves the casques of men,
> My stout lance thrusteth sure;
> My strength is as the strength of ten
> Because my heart is pure.

Only it takes a mighty sober man to say that second line, and when Sir Cyril 'd get to tanglin' his conversational rope on "thrusteth sure," I'd grab my hat and make a more or less direct trail to the bunk house.

When the big bust-up come in the cattle business, owin' to the hard winter of '84 when three-fourths of the cattlemen in the West went to the wall, Sir Cyril was done jest a leetle cleaner 'n any one else, and, after his ranch was gone, he disappeared for several years. I didn't hear a thing about him till I drifted into the sheep game, the cow business never havin' picked up proper, and then, makin' the rounds of the Double-O sheep camps, with

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grub for the herders, who does I run into but Sir Cyril, settin' on the rib bone of an antediluvian monster he had dug up and readin' a book on falconry in the Middle Ages. After I had made two or three trips to his camp I finds out that Sir Cyril's old hobby is clingin' to him like a burr to a mustang's tail, though of course he can't humor it as he did in the days of the 78.

"Jim, old chap," he says, pullin' at his long mustache with the same lovin' touch that a sane man uses in fondlin' a stack of poker chips, "the portraits of my ancestors is all gone, as is most of the rare armor — kickin' around some pawn shop in Denver, no doubt — but I'll let you into a leetle secret. Look here." And with that he pulls up the cover of the box under his bunk in the sheep wagon, and shows me two full suits of armor, with all the knightly trappin's and saddles for two hosses.

"It's all there is left of my ancestor's belongin's, old chap," he says sadly, "but nobody will get these away from me, Jim, as long as I live. I put on the armor occasionally. It used to frighten the sheep some, but now they're used to it, and, in fact, I rawther think they look forward to the appearance of the Dolorous Knight — for such I have dubbed myself — at eventide."

It wasn't long before I had fell into the idea of Sir Cyril's little drammer he was playin' lone-handed out there on the range, and I throwed into the game for the sake of lendin' it an aspect of sociability. I was formally dubbed the Knight of the Cheerful Countenance, and we done everything accordin' to meedieval rules. Sir Cyril 'd allus leave one of the suits of armor, and trappin's for a hoss, in some arroyo near his sheep camp, and, when I come with supplies, I'd put on them things, and then, with my hoss clad in flowin' raiment like a equine ghost and me a-clankin' like a tin-shop in a cyclone, I'd gallop up to the edge of the camp and blow three blasts on a trumpet. They wasn't very clear blasts, nor very musical, 'cause the instrument I'm best on is the jew's-harp, but they'd rouse Sir Cyril, who'd hustle over to the sheep wagon and don the armor of the Dolorous Knight. Purty soon he'd come lopin' out to meet me, and we'd set, with our lances at rest, and go through dialogue somethin' like the followin':

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"Who blows so loud at the drawbridge of ye Dolorous Knight, Sir Cyril Putney?"

"Who but Sir Jim Slattery, Knight of the Cheerful Countenance, who hath rode many miles and far with sundry packages of breakfast food, coffee, and cigarette makin's."

"Enter and welcome, Sir Jim Slattery, Knight of the Cheerful Countenance, and find refreshment for man and beast. Ho, seneschal, lower the drawbridge!"

There bein' no seneschal and no drawbridge, Sir Cyril rides up to the sheep wagon and opens the door with a great clatter, whereupon I rides up and leaves my supplies and find out how things is goin' with the sheep, and come back to earth and the present age in gen'ral.

Now the high plains country is a dangerous place for any man to let his fancies run wild, pertic'larly if he is much alone. Purty soon I finds myself takin' all this Middle Ages play as serious as Sir Cyril himself. You don't have to have much imagination to dream strange day dreams and git queer kinks in your head in a country where magic is workin' all the time. There's magic in the hot, white sunshine, and in the fluffy clouds that sail acrost the bluest sky in the world, and in them far-off mesas whose red sides wink and blink and glow through the purples that come with afternoon. It wain't so strange that us two sheep men soon got to imaginin' them mesas was battlements filled with armed hosts and enchanted maidens, and that the clouds become giants and dragons, and that our fav'rite line of talk sounded like padded cell lingo. I'll bet the plains country of Spain and the plains country of Wyomin' are filled with the same loco weed, for old Donkey Hotey himself never got any crazier'n us two meerage chasers clear out there a thousand miles from nowhere. When we changed camp I rode my gaily caparisoned saddle hoss and the Dolorous Knight drove the team that pulled the sheep wagon, occasionally whistlin' through his visor at the sheep dogs, who kept the sheep on the move, and callin' ahead for me to look out for maraudin' knights who might have designs on our caravan.

There was more'n a jigger of truth in the warnin's of Sir Cyril, for there was bad blood between some of the big sheep and cattle outfits in them days, and raids on sheep camps was common

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occurrences. To be sure the Double-O outfit had been let alone, 'cause we never crossed any cattlemen's dead lines, and we allus stuck to what was ours by right of our bein' first comers. But all the same I never failed to keep clost watch in goin' to and from our sheep camps, and our herders was prepared for trouble.

The thing I had been dreadin' popped one day just after I had got to Sir Cyril's camp. After goin' through the usual preliminaries, such as blowin' the bugle blast and lettin' down the drawbridge, we was settin' in the sheep wagon, clad in full knightly regalia, talkin' about the battle of Agincourt, while our hosses was croppin' buffalo grass clost at hand. All of a sudden we heard the poppin' of guns down where the sheep was feedin', and a bullet comes rippin' through the canvas top of the sheep wagon.

"By Jove, old chap," says Sir Cyril, blinkin' at me through his single-shot eyeglass, "somebody's shootin' our sheep."

"And furthermore them shots through the wagon is notice for us to stay inside," says I.

"But Jim, old chap, we cawn't stand for this, doncherknow," says Sir Cyril, and then the light of battle flamed in his pale blue eyes just as it must have flamed in the eyes of big Sir Arthur Putney when somebody's gauntlet was throwed at his feet.

"A rescue! A rescue!" shouts Sir Cyril, pilin' out of the sheep wagon. "The Dolorous Knight and the Knight of the Cheerful Countenance to the rescue!"

I yells the same thing and follers him, and we runs for our hosses, with our chain shirts clinkin' and our armor clankin,' and our swords bangin' against our legs. Sufferin' bobcats! I ain't heard such a racket since the Two-Bar mess wagon run away and scattered the cook's tin dishes all over a prairie dog town.

Onc't in the saddle I took a look around and savvied the situation at a glance. They was six men down in the bunch of sheep, a-shootin' right and left with their revolvers. They hadn't bothered to give us more'n them two shots through the top of the sheep wagon, thinkin', no doubt, that we would just curl up and lay quiet till they had killed all the sheep, when they would probably come up and burn our outfit and chase us outen the country.

I pulled down my visor, and, wavin' my lance, started my hoss on the jump for the sheep. At that I was a long ways behind

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Sir Cyril, who had moved quicker'n I ever thought possible. He was a tall man and lean, and he made somethin' of a figger as he went clippity-clip and clankety-clank ahead of me, bouncin' fully two feet outen his saddle at every jump, and with a long black plume a streamin' over his helmet and his shield braced ag'in his left arm and his lance couched in his right.

I must have made just as stirrin' a sight, for I was goin' through the same performance a few rods behind Sir Cyril. But I reckon the cattlemen who was conductin' the raid didn't feel much like laughin' when they looked up and seen a cross section of the Middle Ages comin' down on them like an avalanche. It must jar a man's brain processes summut to be engaged in a piece of up-to-date mischief like sheep killin' and then find himself called to account by a couple of locos who look as if they had stepped right outen a King Arthur story-book. Anyway, them sheep-killers stood with their mouths open as much as a full minit before they realized they'd have to be throwin' some lead in our direction if they hoped to make a getaway. They had left their bronchos in a clump of cottonwoods near by, and had gone at the work of sheep-slaughterin' on foot. Every man jack of 'em wore a mask, and, from the handy way they was killin' the sheep, I was willin' to bet it wasn't the fust job of the kind they had tackled.

In a minit the bullets begin buzzin' around us. One of 'em whined out of disapp'intment when it struck my iron shield and went singin' off into the atmosphere, and I could hear 'em doin' the same when they glanced off Sir Cyril's boiler plate clothes. Not one of 'em struck fair enough to go through, though occasionally one'd give me a stingin' sensation when it'd glance off an arm or leg. But it was just like shootin' at frogs with a squirt gun for all the real harm that was done, and them six cowmen begin to realize that things was some serious when each one of 'em had emptied a gun and chivalry was still in the saddle.

The sheep had scattered and run off the range, and the cowmen was left standin' alone in the draw. They turned and run for their horses, in the hope of gettin' the rifles they had left in their saddle scabbards. The story might have been different if they had got them big guns, but as it was we had turned it into a Dark Ages picnic in five minits. There never was a cowboy that could run

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a lick on earth on foot, anyhow, and in a jiffy Sir Cyril had caught up with the hindmost one.

"Die, caitiff!" he yells, and the point of his lance goes through the cowboy's clothes, somewhere betwixt the belt and skin, and buries itself in the ground. There was a shock and the splinterin' of wood, and Sir Cyril's hoss nearly went over, and the lance was busted plum in two. As for the cowboy, he laid on the ground, gettin' cuss-words all mixed up with howls of pain, for he had slivers enough in him to keep a needle-expert busy a week.

By this time I had caught up with one of the sheep-killers, and, instid of puncturin' him with my lance, I lifted the point as I went past and give the misguided yokel a kick with my iron-pointed shoe, which sent him spinnin' off into the sagebrush as dazed as a jackrabbit that had figgered in a collision with a kyote.

I seen Sir Cyril lay out two more, usin' his busted lance as a battle ax, and I took care of another who was down on his knees in a cactus bed gibberin' like a prairie dog. That left one raider — a big feller who was evidently the leader of the outfit. He had done some purty fair sprintin', and had reached his hoss, with Sir Cyril thunderin' a few rods behind him.

My heart sure stood still when I seen that sheep-killer take keerful aim and fire. Then I purty near yelled my head off for joy, as Sir Cyril kept right on, simply reelin' in his saddle a little when that heavy bullet glanced off his helmet. The feller tried to dodge, but he might as well tried dodgin' a thunderbolt. Down come the lance on his head, and by the time the Dolorous Knight had wheeled for another charge it was a sick raider who was tryin' to get up outen the dust, with a rifle so badly jammed that it wouldn't pump worth a cent.

When I rode up Sir Cyril had dismounted and was standin' with his foot on the raider's chest and his sword at the feller's throat.

"Yield thee, false knight, or I slay thee in accordance with the rules of the lists," he was bellowin', and I believe if I hadn't pulled him away there'd have been murder done, as all the raider could holler was "'Nuff," and Sir Cyril didn't recognize the Missouri translation of the word surrender.

We came near havin' our first falling out, Sir Cyril and me,

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over the question of disposin' of them prisoners of war. Sir Cyril wanted to load them with wagon-brake chains and keep 'em a few years in an underground dungeon which he proposed diggin' in an adjoinin' mesa which greatly resembled a castle. I finally persuaded him, however, that the best plan'd be to treat 'em as their kind treats sheep herders. So we kep' their hosses and saddles as spoils of war, and then we turned 'em loose afoot, with warnin's as to what'd happen if we caught 'em on our baronial sheep range ag'in, after which we gathered up our scattered bunch, and found there wasn't over twenty missin'.

Sir Cyril wanted me to go with him on a raid in the country of the cattle barons, where he said there were many wicked knights to be slain and much spoil to be taken by two such doughty knights as we had proved to be. In fact, he was worse conceited over the outcome of our fight than an Injun who has been on as a successful hoss stealin' raid. He wanted to boast of our deeds all the while, and he kep' enlargin' the affair until finally it was nothin' short of an army we had licked.

I seen if things drifted along that way much longer we would both be fightin' chimerys in a padded cell, so I wrote to some of Sir Cyril's relatives in England, where it seems there had been an estate waitin' for him ever since he disappeared after the bust-up of the cow business. When he learned that he was to get a ruined castle and seventeen more suits of armor, and a gallery full of ancestral portraits, he consented to go.

"But, O Knight of the Cheerful Countenance," he says to me when we had our last handshake at the railroad station, "it grieves me sore to think that thou wilt not come and dwell with me, for full many a gallant adventure might we have in England's forests, though perhaps no such glorious victory as our battle with the hosts from the cattle baron's castle."

But I knowed better than to accept, as I figgered that the loco'd leave both of us, if we herded alone — and particularly in Sir Cyril's case if he went to a country where there ain't such pure air and magnificent distances to fire a man's imagination.

And after events proved that I was right.

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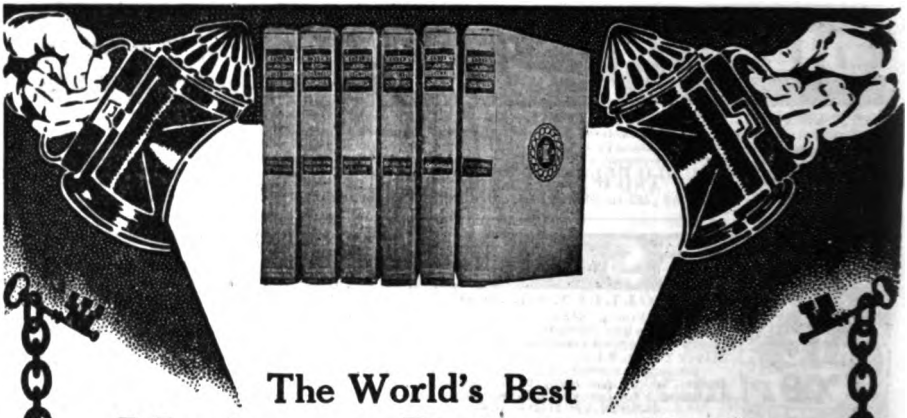

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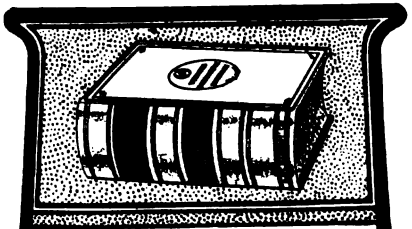

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